The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

EDITORIAL BOARD
MICHAEL WILLIAMS, Editor
GEORGE N. SHUSTER, Managing Editor
MARY KOLARS, Assistant Editor
FREDERIC THOMPSON, Assistant Editor

JOHN F. McCORMICK, Business Manager

EDITORIAL COUNCIL
CARLTON J. H. HAYES
T. LAWRASON RIGGS
RICHARD DANA SKINNER
JAMES J. WALSH

Published weekly and copyrighted, 1935, in the United States, by the Calvert Publishing Corporation, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y. Entered as second-class matter, February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. United States: $5.00; Canada: $5.50; Foreign: $6.00. Single copies: $.10.

VOLUME XXII — Friday, October 4, 1935 — NUMBER 23

CONTENTS

The Crisis Fully Revealed 537
Week by Week 538
Double Money ..... Christopher Hollis 541
Individualism and So On ..... Philip Burnham 543
Late September (*verse*) ..... Sister Maris Stella 544
Humanism and Humanity ..... Russell Wilbur 545
Crime Room of Scotland Yard ..... Alice Curtayne 548
American Painters ..... James W. Lane 551
Seven Days' Survey 552
The Play ..... Grenville Vernon 556
Communications 557
Books ..... Patrick J. Healy, Daniel Sargent, George N. Shuster, Edward S. Skillin, jr., Lucy L. Tompkins 559

Previous issues of THE COMMONWEAL are indexed in the *Readers' Guide* and the *Catholic Periodical Index*

THE CRISIS FULLY REVEALED

WITH the swift, menacing concentration of the British fleet in the Mediterranean, the whole aspect of the Italo-Ethiopian situation abruptly changed from a potential to an actual and imminent threat to the peace of the world. The passage of the British fleet from its home waters to the inland sea which was the birthplace, the source, and for fifteen centuries the radiant center of western, that is to say, Christian, civilization, ended a chapter of human history. What the next chapter will be is beyond the wisdom of the wisest to predict, save in general terms. Only one thing seems certain, namely, that all the expedients, and experiments, through which those who since the World War have directed the policies of the nations of the world, have striven to achieve an equilibrium of national forces that would give humanity at least a long, if not a permanent, state of peace and security, have utterly failed. Before these words can appear in print, war may be raging not only in Africa, but in the very heart of Europe. Even if—as we hope, and as we believe—the second catastrophe (or even the first) may be temporarily averted, it seems clear that (humanly speaking) war sooner or later is now inevitable. Force—armed, military force—is now the open and declared instrument not only of dictatorial, absolute governments, but is revealed as being the chief reliance of most of the other governments of the world.

All this in spite of the fact that war was solemnly renounced as an instrument of national policy (save for purposes of unmistakable defense against unprovoked aggression) by practically all the nations. These nations, through their respective governments, pledged their honor to live up to the obligations of the Kellogg-Briand treaty. So did all the nations affiliated with the League of Nations pledge their

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

honor to live up to the obligations of such membership—which obligations made up the greater part of what there is of international law. Yet the two most powerful nations in the League, Great Britain and France, ignored these obligations to the League when Japan invaded Manchuria. Now they invoke all the powers of the League, and, in the case of Great Britain, the mighty naval power controlled by it, against Italy. That they are morally right in so doing, the world at large does not doubt; but it is now as clear as daylight itself that not until Great Britain felt its own imperial interests directly threatened did its moral sense of honor to its solemn obligations become sufficiently aroused to cause it to act in accordance with those obligations. In other words, honor does not control, direct, or even affect the policy of the governments of the world today until or unless these governments believe that their own selfish, national, material interests are at stake.

Thus is now let loose the most enormous peril which can afflict humanity—the loss of faith in governments on the part of great masses, possibly even a majority, of the people of the world. The moral law which is the only conceivable basis for reasonable, honorable, human dealings between nations (as between groups and individuals) has been so thoroughly flouted, disregarded, ignored or even derided by so many governments and rulers since (and of course before) the World War, that now the desperate attempts of those governments which find their material interests threatened by Italy (and Germany, and Japan and Russia) to unite the world against Italy on moral grounds is an utter failure.

It has been the fatal separation of religion from high politics, and education, and secular life in general—including industry and commerce, and art and science and literature and philosophy—which has brought this awful disaster upon mankind. For several centuries, but particularly in the fatal nineteenth century, and the opening decades of the twentieth, religion has been thrust out of the arena of secular affairs—from governing an empire, down to running a bank, or a labor union, a mill, or a cross-roads store. Religion was relegated to Sunday, and six days of the week were devoted by the general mass of humanity to pursuing money or power or social advancement, or sensuous pleasure, or intellectual interests, in ways from which true honor, and a spiritual conscience, and the laws of morality and ethics were either totally or at least generally excluded. Lip service, however—hypocritical invocations—were rendered to the laws of God by a great number of those most active in dodging them. Others, and more and more a growing number, frankly denied the existence of such laws. Others again, the modern Laodiceans, did not care, one way or the other.

But the laws of God, the obligations of truth, and honor, and conscience, and justice, and charity, being supreme, being more absolute than any physical law (for the latter may be nullified or at least temporarily deflected by some other physical law, which the will of man may be able to direct: as an airplane may be used to nullify the law of gravity)—God's laws, we repeat, being truly absolute, cannot be dodged or defeated. They claim and can enforce the claim of absolute obedience. If defied, punishment follows unavoidably. By tampering with the law of honor which should bind governments inflexibly to their plighted word, governments are now losing the only thing which can enable free governments to rule free peoples, namely, the faith of their peoples.

So the dictators, and the absolute governments ruling strictly and nakedly by force, reemerge in the arena of world affairs. And the last of the comparatively free nations are compelled themselves to arm, and increase their arms, and, having betrayed their own honor, now they must face force with force.

One last moment of the most awful import may be left in which mankind may make its final choice, namely, to turn (or not to turn) once again to God, the Father of all, and in repentance and reparation regain the sense of honor, and the faith in moral values, which even now might avert the calamity that is so close upon us all.

Week by Week

WAR clouds settled definitely on the world, overcasting even the American sky. The fact that British and Italian fleets were harbored side by side in the Mediterranean gave rise to worry lest some incident — another sinking of the Maine—might lead to a clash and therewith to a conflagration possibly world-wide. Just what the British hoped to effect remained unknown. Did they hope by a show of force to answer Mussolini's display of truculence? Gradually Ethiopia itself faded out of the picture. The world was concerned far less with a primitive African monarchy refusing to surrender its sovereignty peacefully than with the inter-European struggle for dominion. Would the "new Roman Empire," which Fascism wishes to establish, find its first major foe in that modern empire which Britons serve with a nationalistic ardor at least equal to any felt in Rome? Or had a fresh sign been given that the far-flung reign of the Union Jack was about to meet new and possibly mortal tests? Americans might well look into their papers with wonder and fear. The threat of a new appeal to force—and a force

The Trend of Events

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which, according to many predictions, can spread ruin in a manner undreamed of even by the combatants of 1917—seemed to hang low over the ancient sea associated with so many of the memories from which the thing termed civilization has been culled, and to infect even distant peoples' attitude toward their problems. We are still all far from a new war, apparently, but the shadow of the storm has crept perilously close.

Hit and Run Writing

SOME time ago the careless motorist was asked to read an article, reprinted from the *Reader's Digest,* which described in gory diction the effects of a collision. We hope the thing did some good—there is plenty of room for improvement, the Lord knows. Meanwhile a number of newspapers have adopted the suggestion, and are serving up gory accounts of especially bad auto tragedies. One is told exactly what happened to the victim's skull; and one especially effective reporter turned up with a girl who, after the accident, was "spitting teeth." It seems to us that he is a bold psychologist who expects that such reporting will help prevent silly driving. As a matter of fact, it may cater to sadistic impulses and induce utter disregard for human life. People seem to forget that their ancestors (of a certain type, of course) thoroughly enjoyed grewsome accounts of torture. As a matter of fact, many of them got a great kick out of actually witnessing the torture. Improvement set in as soon as humanity was educated to look upon such things as barbarous, wicked and in bad taste. Torture began to disappear about the same time that Uncle Toby discovered he couldn't hurt a fly. We seem to have about run the gamut of those motives. But it will help little if we now faddishly develop a habit of relishing anatomical narratives of smash-ups and murders. There is plenty of tendency to do so already.

Lay Sermons

TWO GOOD, short, simple snappy sermons rewarded those who attended the "Loyalty Sunday" anticipation meeting in New York on September 22, answering the appeal sent out by Religion and Welfare Recovery. "Al" Smith and Mayor La Guardia, both from the sidewalks of New York, pointed a finger at the world about them and repeated, in other words, the prophet's warning that man must return to his God. We read the two addresses carefully. Little that was novel could be found in the substance of either, though Mr. Smith commented upon the danger of war and Mr. La Guardia reminded his audience of biblical statements anent usury. But how very good the form is! Straight from the shoulder and effective, emphasizing moral action derived from spiritual conviction, this discourse is marvelously well adapted to the common listener. By comparison, how regrettable it is that so much preaching is either encrusted with old rhetorical devices, or so limited to mere pulpit opinion! We think that Catholic sermons suffer primarily from the first fault. They show hard work trying to acquire all the tricks which one-time theorists, whose activities were limited to the humanistic classroom, thought would render oratory appealing. It doesn't, and we hope our young seminarians are being told as much. The way to talk to people is to tell them what's on your mind. The rest is a matter of voice training and getting used to it. The present Mayor of New York isn't even much to look at. But he can orate. And "Al," who breaks all the rules in the book, is always booked up.

Continuing Charity

THE RECENT Mobilization for Human Needs, when leaders of welfare organizations from all parts of the country met to plan the main outlines of their enterprise for the next year, emphasized again a fundamental principle rather than developed anything startlingly new. The principle is one that in times of economic exuberance gets served very well in fact, but like most fundamental principles in times of exuberance, is given relatively little thought. Then in time of stress, the service becomes more difficult and the balance of the previous equation shifts. The principle, of course, is that private, that individual charity must go on at all times; it is necessary for those who in agony of spirit, or in a dull poverty of spirit, need help, as it is necessary for those who without the exercise of charity must suffer a selfish deterioration of character ranging from brutishness to escapism. This is so whatever political forms may be or whether social order improve for the whole community or become a matter of fierce divisions of the favored from those in outer darkness. It is an inescapable individualism and in a time of great uncertainties, the practise of charity is one of the fundamental things, with its two familiar concomitants, that have to be preserved at all costs if a core of civilization is to be preserved. The Mobilization for Human Needs emphasized again the familiar facts that in spite of all that is being done by communities corporately, and by the community of the nation, through government to help the weak, there are great areas of the works of corporal mercy in the fields of nursing, hospitals, child welfare, recreation and youth guidance where private agencies have to function. These agencies have carried on with a shrinkage of only 13 percent since 1929 in the amounts they have raised. This is certainly creditable and at the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

same time it is a challenge, for the needs have not shrunken.

A Good Cause

CATHOLICS are finding life very difficult in Germany these days, and it is imperative that they be remembered constantly, despite the fact that headlines tend to blind us to everything save dictatorship. Particularly in danger are all so-called "cultural" activities—the press, educational, study circles, books and their distribution. We notice, for example, that some of the oldest and best dailies (e.g., the *Augsburger Postzeitung*) have already ceased to appear, and that several of the finest periodicals are in imminent danger of shipwreck. Among these last none is, perhaps, as eminent as *Hochland,* which is doubtless in many respects the most distinguished Catholic review in any language. In a recent frank statement to his friends, the editor correctly says: "Let us imagine what it would mean if *Hochland* disappeared from the cultural life of Germany and Catholicism. A certain spiritual philistinism might not miss it, but that which is truly public opinion would miss it sorely, for this 'public opinion' is not the property merely of the many who subscribe to the periodical but above all of the thousands who patronize public libraries and reading rooms, in which *Hochland* has always been one of the magazines most in demand." It would be very helpful indeed if those libraries and individuals in the United States that keep in touch with German achievement would remember at least this one periodical. Germany would not be Germany without it; and the danger, alas, is great enough that another literary victim may be added to the Nazi funeral pyre, not because of direct government opposition but because economic pressure of every kind now rests so heavy upon the land.

Nursing for All

AN INTERESTING investigation is being launched in Brooklyn by the nursing committee of the Kings County Medical Society, as the prelude of a possible campaign which should be of great benefit to that part of the public bounded on the one side by the wealthy and on the other by the very poor. This is the class whose medical problem has been of late years the theme of much justified concern and the occasion of many suggestions. The members of this group enjoy at best only very moderate incomes. In times of serious illness, they cannot command the resources of skill and care at the disposal of the rich. On the other hand, they are not expected to—and in general they do not—avail themselves of the free, or nominally priced, medical and nursing services designed for those too poor to pay. The result, so far at least as nursing is concerned, is that this very valuable adjunct to the sick régime is a luxury which these people usually do without. It is the hope of the Kings County Medical Society, after the results of its questionnaire are known, to do some needed publicity work on the feasibility in such cases of part-time nursing. Mortal sickness aside, there is no question that a large number of illnesses which later develop into something serious, occasionally something fatal, could be treated successfully if the trained care and watchfulness of the nurse were there to supplement the work of the physician. If a schedule of part-time fees can be worked out which is fair to the nurses and not exorbitant for the patients, it will represent a signal contribution to general health as well as toward the solution of a difficult problem. Moreover, it will increase and distribute employment among nurses—whose profession has suffered in these years as have all professions, and who have already earned any betterment in conditions that can possibly come to them.

Idea with Possibilities

NOT ALL strikes are so amusing as the one pulled off in Brooklyn by the Chicago Opera Company, which after singing through two acts of "Aida" refused *en masse* to sing the third act until its salaries were paid: a consummation achieved after a wondering audience had waited for half an hour for the curtain to rise upon the melodious and mortuary finale. Not all strikes are so amusing, to repeat; and it occurs to us that neither are all strikes so successful. There are possibilities here which deserve to be widely studied. Of course the nuisance idea—the design of annoying both the employer and the public—is at the basis of every strike. But the operatic artists (supposedly a people of dreamy, impractical nature) fixed the psychological point for this maneuver, the point which ensured a maximum pitch of anguish for the manager and of desire for the public, much more exactly than it has ever been done by the hard-headed people who usually arrange such things. Perhaps this finer technique will take hold. The striking waiter, instead of walking up and down outside, may follow his plea by whisking the steaming steak away after the patron has had only a single bite; or upsetting the foaming tankard after he has taken but one draught. The taxi-man may drive his more outlying fare half way to Flatbush at two in the morning, and then call it a night. The publishers' employees may put half of the best stories and articles into print, and throw the balance away. The method might not in all cases endear the striker to the public, but it is warranted, without any bashing of bayonets, to make the public striker-conscious.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DOUBLE MONEY

By CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

Last week, in a paper entitled, "What Has Broken Down?", Mr. Hollis discussed the nature and operation of the monetary policy in use during modern times. The present article holds that "maintaining a stable price level" is the objective of the governments of Great Britain and the United States, both of which are thus returning "to the ancient medieval policy of the kings of England." The advantages and disadvantages of capitalistic monetary action are then discussed.—The Editor.

WHAT then should be the aim of a new monetary policy?

It is no purpose of this article to take sides in the party politics, whether of England or of America. But, whatever criticism they deserve on other counts, there can, I think, be no question that both the British and American governments are today pursuing the only possible monetary policy—that of maintaining a stable price-level. After the catastrophe of the English gold standard in 1931 the delegates of the British Empire countries assembled at the Ottawa Conference, passed a resolution pledging the countries to pursue a policy of maintaining a constant purchasing power for sterling in terms of goods and, as a glance at the graph will show, that policy has ever since been pursued with success. At the same time President Roosevelt committed the United States to the policy of the commodity dollar, and he, too, has on this large issue met with success. There have been incidental difficulties, of which the largest was that throughout the world there was not merely a monetary but a real overproduction of cotton and wheat. That is to say, there was produced not merely more wheat and cotton than the consumers could buy but even more than they wanted, even if they could have bought all that they wanted. Production in those two commodities had to be adjusted to real demand.

It is outside the scope of this article to consider how these and other incidental problems have been faced. All that I want to make clear is that both the British and the American governments have, on this point at any rate, not struck out on any new revolutionary policy but have pursued the only policy that it was at all possible for them to pursue. Incidentally, pursuing it, they have returned to the ancient medieval policy of the kings of England who held the price-level stable up to the Black Death and again from the Black Death until it was upset by the inflationary effect of the coining of the monastic plate and Henry VIII's debasement of the coinage. Experience and theory alike combine to show that there is no real danger of such experiments collapsing into the catastrophe of inflation.

The general principles of a stable monetary policy are not difficult to lay down, however difficult may be the application of them from day to day under turbulent political pressure. The principle is, first, to obtain — as all countries now have—a reliable index of commodity prices and to watch that index daily. If one commodity goes up in its price and another comes down, you have no reason to bother. That is merely an indication of a real change in the public taste. But, if prices in general are going up or are going down, then an injustice is being committed—to creditors and people with fixed incomes if the prices are going up, to debtors and producers if they are going down. And the injustice must be corrected—by putting out more money if prices have a tendency to fall, or by calling in some money if they show a tendency to rise. In a country of increasing productive capacity they are more likely of themselves to show a tendency to fall than to rise, and therefore the more usual problem of governments will be how to issue more money in order to purchase the increased quantity of goods. As long as you have unemployed and public works that want doing, the best plan is clearly, wherever possible, to put money in the pockets of the unemployed for performing those public works. When all the public works that want doing are done, then it will be easy enough to issue new money by merely unbalancing the budget.

Under the old system manufacturers had to fight their way into foreign markets in order to get rid of goods that were unsellable at home. Under the new system of the stable price-level there will always in every country be sufficient purchasing power to purchase that country's products. There will be no motive to export save to exchange some article of which you have a superabundance for some foreign article which you desire. There will be no motive to dump. The Japanese, instead of being anxious to push their goods into every market of Europe, will only wish to send to Europe sufficient goods to exchange against the imports which they themselves want. The Europeans will thank the Japanese if they sell their goods cheap, as it will mean that they have less coal to hew in order to buy them.

Such propositions may possibly seem strange to some who have not had occasion to give their minds to the subject. But in all honesty there is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not in them, I think, anything controversial. There is no alternative to the maintenance of a stable price-level. It is indeed possible to debate whether it is wiser, as productivity increases, to keep incomes stable and let prices fall, or to keep prices stable and let incomes rise, but it is no longer possible to let prices wobble about at the arbitrary accident of gold holdings. All that is important is that people should recognize that fact and not obstruct by impractical proposals.

That is to say, the pre-war international monetary machinery is simply unworkable in the changed circumstances of the post-war world. Slightly different is our problem when we come to the domestic monetary machinery. The domestic business of all civilized countries has been carried on for the last two hundred years on what Bishop Berkeley called the system of "double money." That is to say, we do by far the greater part of our business with one another by the writing of cheques. The recipient pays the cheque into the bank, and the bank then deducts the amount of it from the balance of the writer of the cheque and adds the amount to that of the recipient. No cash changes hands at all.

Yet, of course, that which gives this first sort of money, cheque-money, its value, is the fact that anyone who has a claim on it—anyone, that is, with a balance at the bank—can, if he wishes to, go to the bank and demand to be paid his deposits in cash. The banks know from experience that in practise their depositors only demand in cash a fraction of that which they have a right to demand, and, secure in that knowledge, they are able to lend out well beyond their cash holdings. On the other hand, the fact that they are under obligation to make good in cash even that fraction of their promises puts a limit to the amount of promises to pay that they are able to issue in loans. In America, I understand that banks are also forbidden by law to lend more than a certain multiple of their cash holdings, but that is not so in England.

It is sometimes said that, if we accept the cheques of a bank in discharge of payments due to us, we do so because we have confidence in the bank and that no Act of Parliament can command us not to trust someone that we do in fact trust. But that is really only true in the purely formal sense in which an agreement between a capitalist and a workman without property or capital to pay and to accept a subsistence wage was described by the *laissez-faire* theorists of the last century as an agreement freely arrived at. If the editor of THE COMMONWEAL pays for this article—as I suppose he will—by a cheque, I shall gladly accept that cheque. But I shall accept it not because I have any confidence either in his bank or in my own. Doubtless if I care to take that particular cheque to my bank, I can get it cashed. But I am perfectly well aware that, if more than a small fraction of the bank's clients took their cheques to the bank, the bank could not cash those cheques. I accept payment by cheque not because I have confidence in the banking system but because I know very well that, if I did not accept payment by cheque, the editor would think that I was a cranky fellow and not trouble to employ me at all. The public does its business in cheque-money, in this sense bank-created, not because it has a preference for bank-created money over other money, but because it has a preference for money over no money, and, as the system is, if it did not get its money by loans from banks and other financial institutions, it could not get it at all.

It is sometimes said that banks only lend their depositors' money. But in truth it is not the deposits which make possible the overdrafts, but the overdrafts which create the deposits. It is only to a trivial extent the people deposit cash in a bank. What they deposit as a general rule are cheques. And where do these cheques come from? From loans which the bank has made to other people. The bank gives to A a loan of $1,000—that is to say, gives him a license to write cheques up to $1,000. He writes cheques for $500 to B and for $500 to C, who then pay them into the bank which is able to announce that deposits are up by $1,000.

Now is this system a good system or a bad system? I do not mean, are the people who are working it good men or bad men? Many of the people who are working it are among the most honest, the most conscientious, technically the most competent, of the world's citizens; others, no doubt, as is the world's way, are less estimable. But I am not concerned with personalities one way or the other, nor am I even concerned here with the fundamental ethical problem whether it is proper to allow to private individuals this wide power of putting out and pulling in money—for that is what their power is. I am concerned only with the pragmatic question whether this system can work or not.

Now, if we look through the history of the last 150 years, we find those years to have been in many ways years of progress. On the other hand progress has not been steady. The happiness of humanity has throughout been menaced by the intolerable alternation of slump and boom, a slump always coming just as we were about to enter into the inheritance of a higher prosperity.

What was the cause of these slumps? They were certainly not caused by any cyclical decline in the real productive capacity of mankind. Each slump had its own particular history, but, contributing to each slump, it is, I think, fair to say, we can find the factor of a fundamental defect in the double money system.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The defect is this. There is a boom—the country is producing almost up to its full capacity. Now, in order to finance that production, the banks have put out all the loans that they dare to put out. They have lent out promises to pay full ten times the cash that they are in fact able to pay. Now it is an important truth that in times of prosperity people demand a slightly higher proportion of their bank deposits to be paid to them in cash than they do in quieter times. In the quiet times they only asked for one-tenth of that to which they were entitled. Then the clouds break; prosperity begins, and all over the country men feel that they must celebrate the good times. They want a good dinner; they want a rather more expensive holiday than they had last year; at last they can find this and that little luxury that could not be afforded before. Wages are up a little and wages must be paid in cash. The result is that this very feeling of prosperity causes people to demand, say, one-eighth of their deposits in cash whereas previously they only asked for one-tenth. Therefore the banks which until prosperity began had been entirely safe, become, through no fault of their own, immediately unsafe. In order to make themselves safe, they have to call in some of their loans. This reduces the sum total of money in circulation. Down come prices. The producer finds himself unable to sell his goods at a price at which he will get his costs back, and boom collapses into slump. It is, under the double money system, prosperity itself which kills prosperity. We are like Tantalus. The very action of raising the cup of prosperity to our lips in order that we may drink it inevitably causes its contents to vanish away.

INDIVIDUALISM AND SO ON

By PHILIP BURNHAM

POLITICAL criticism today seems to emphasize two subjects: the totalitarian state and the class struggle. Marxians cover the two subjects with their great blanket of metaphysics and bring forth from under a single solution, the classless society, with the whole state withered up and dispersed in the dramatic dialectical climax. They do not approach political tyranny as a thing meriting study in itself. Whether presented to them in a hypothetical or acual instance, they bring it into a kind of causal relationship which amounts to identity with other problems about which they have formed analytical opinions without sufficient reference to the problem at hand. Thus their deep and fervently held analysis of the class structure of society seems to prevent an approach to the totalitarian state by the scientific method. Instead of looking upon it as a phenomenon which deserves in itself an analytical breakdown and a combination with other phenomena by an inductive process, they lay themselves open to the charge of classifying it by an obiter dicta, deduced from a previously held belief.

Perhaps in this they support an extreme which is useful in finding a closer approach to likelihood than those people achieve who radically dissociate the two questions and believe they can find freedom and a reasonable state without solving the crushing problem of class war. Certainly the doctrines or facts of class war and the totalitarian state are interrelated intimately, and I do not believe the totalitarian state can be permanently avoided until the class struggle has been so reduced that it cannot fit into the present description. There is no overwhelming reason, on the other hand, to hope that a solution of the class struggle would necessarily remove the possibility of the totalitarian state. This article is an attempt to show how many people feel totalitarianism presents itself. Later there will be an attempt to relate the economic war to the picture, and to derive certain types of action which seem called for by the supposed situation.

The point of departure is usually a view of our present capitalistic, liberal states as the basis on which are built individualism and totalitarianism, and these exclusively. On this base whatever is not taken up by one is taken up by the other, and there is no room for anything else. On one side are individual persons and on the other is the government. The only politically recognized intercourse between the individuals is indirect, through the government, or by contracts which are enforced by the government and which must conform to laws established by the government. These laws are designed to protect the freedom of the individual; that is, to insure that his intercourse with other persons will not in any fundamental way or in many specific ways change his direct and isolated, his proud and sovereign, status before the government and toward other citizens. Every American has the same rights as every other American, and the extent of all these rights is determined by law which is controlled by the government. Our politics is equalitarian and atomistic. This is obviously not a picture that can be proved like a geometric proposition, but from reading books and observing current affairs it is one which seems to fit present

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conditions with disturbing convincingness, nowhere totally, but even in America, almost.

From this base the inevitable growth has been displayed with overwhelming authority. Isolated individuals, acting under the same laws, leave each other at ever-increasing angles. In matters which the equalitarian state leaves to the individual inequality grows and perpetuates itself. As conditions become more complicated individuals find themselves unable to handle in their free, isolated manner, more and more aspects of life. They are forced to turn one function after another over to the state, which, besides themselves, is the only organism functioning with authority.

At the same time the state becomes an increasingly futile instrument for bringing contact between citizens. Persons have an almost purely mathematical existence for the government. They are recognized only through the adding-machine process of the ballot, or in the courts designed to protect their individualism, or in the relief station or internal revenue bureau. The increasingly mechanical type of union furnished by voting is hinted at by the fact that when our Constitution was adopted there was one representative allotted for every 30,000 of the population, and now there is one for every 280,674. And even the most personalistic political organizations such, for instance, as Tammany, are unable to keep constituents feeling that they have a real contact with their representatives, and still less that through their representatives they achieve an adequate contact and relationship with other citizens. The modern state has satisfactorily performed only a very limited number of the functions individuals have not carried on—which have constantly increased. Probably the main function the government has failed in is adjudicating disputes the private members send up for settlement. Controversies arise in the private sphere which are incapable of solution as long as the methods that brought them about exist privately. The only way on the historical basis to eliminate the methods is for the state to abolish them and take over the functions they were used to carry on. Individuals have failed completely in more and more functions, passing them on to the state as a habit, and, in a growing number of other activities, have come so close to failure that charity, justice and right reason are offended.

The contemporary private corporation has not staved off the bankruptcy of the liberal, individualistic hope. In the first place, our corporations are persons and are treated by the state as such. Their poetically anonymous personalities simply raise to a higher and more dangerous plane the conflicting position in which our politics has left individual persons. They, like an ordinary citizen, find themselves utterly unable to handle more and more aspects of life, and incapable of handling well still more. The functions they abandon also go by devolution to the only thing besides individuals, the government. And in their accepted pose as persons they have the dignity and freedom and equality of human citizens. In the receding private sphere guaranteed by the state they act as sovereign in a manner which has been eliminated in the public sphere. Their peculiarly ruthless private action makes human citizens thoroughly conscious of the atomistic character of the state: they are isolated, independent persons, having at best equal rights with all other persons, rich and poor, human and corporate. Over against these individuals is the government. The government is asked to do what the individuals cannot do.

The question of who possesses the state does not arise in this sketch. Say that it is owned now by the owners of productve property. This does not change the fact that there is only place on the foundation of its existence for individuals and their permitted and guaranteed rights on the one hand and for the state power on the other. The balance of power between the government and the individuals is arranged by pressures which bode no good to the propertyless man. As an individual, the citizen is an atom, separated from others, possessing only his own rights and his own power. The state embodies the residue of powers and rights and governs all rights and powers as a club in the hands of the property-owning individuals, doing what they cannot do conveniently as persons. If, on the other hand, now or in a conceivable system, such as Communism, the state is controlled quite equally by every citizen, the case is even more clearly the same. There are still individuals, capable of carrying on by themselves their decreasing number of functions, with their status of liberty and equality permitted by the state. Over against them is still the government, protecting, enforcing, dispensing, accumulating and acting.

Late September

Here in this place the asters blow noiseless
In the warm wind. The leaves fall without sound.
Birds flit on the dry boughs and motionless
The squirrels sit with curved tails, and paws around
Acorns, but they do not eat nor stir
Nor talk. Among the gentians blue as sky
They sit staring as if the gentians were
Lights suddenly lit to startle the eye.
Nothing calls out here. Nothing will ever call
Perhaps, ever, nor bird, nor flower, nor leaf
Utter a faint heard syllable of fear,
Though the incipient ruin of the fall
Haunts the bright branches like a dream of grief
Dimly remembered from a vanished year.

SISTER MARIS STELLA.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HUMANISM AND HUMANITY

WHY MYSTICAL ANIMALS CAN'T BE TAMED

By RUSSELL WILBUR

IN A RECENT article entitled "A Word about Babbitt" in THE COMMONWEAL of January 25, 1935, the present writer made great case or attempted to do so of a certain mysticity which he asserted to be natural to all men by virtue of their birth as children of Adam under the existing economy of Divine Providence but which he asserted to be, ontologically, something simply though rudimentarily super-natural.

Two brief quotations from the article of January 18 will indicate our problem:

> (1) . . . *the mystical appetite of "the One,"* which exists in every man as a rudiment of the super-natural order, its object, the One, being vague and anonymous so far as each individual is concerned until the individual is informed as to the identity of the One by revelation, or by tradition, or by sound theistic reasoning, or by any two of them or by all three. . . .
>
> (2) Theism is "natural," an exercise and a product of the "natural" reason; but *numinous emotion*—the consequence doubtless of some spontaneous apprehension, however vague and confused, of the objectively numinous, of "the holy"—is a rudiment of the super-natural which exists to some extent in everybody. . . .

[In this article whenever the terms, "nature," "natural," "naturally," are used as here with quotation marks they have reference to what is strictly proper to man as a rational animal. This is to use the terms ontologically or philosophically.

Whenever these terms are used of man's endowment or performance without quotation marks they refer to human nature as it exists in that economy of Divine Providence which, as a matter of fact, has always obtained and obtains now—an economy in which man is constituted to become something more than merely a rational animal, namely, the child and spouse of God. This use of the terms is not philosophical but historical.

Waiving the question of the identification of the objectively numinous, of "the holy," with the super-natural—a question which is drenched in matter and perhaps more full of dubiety than the precise question which we have to deal with here—the problem is: how can men have naturally a knowledge however vague and confused of "the One" as the Super-natural End, the intimate Spouse and Home of the soul?

Sound theistic reasoning puts at our disposal a "natural" knowledge of God *sub ratione primi entis,* that is, as the Supreme Being and First Cause; and, as Cardinal Newman was never tired of asserting, such reasoning can be and often is conducted *implicitly* for the most part by very simple and unlettered men. But no exercise of the abstractive-discursive intellect-reason which is strictly "natural" to a rational animal can give us God as the Spouse and Home of the soul, what Catholic theology calls our Super-natural End.

But—*ignoti nulla cupido;* what isn't known can't be desired.

If, however confusedly, an appetite for God as the Spouse and Home of the soul is active from the very beginning of self-consciousness in our deepest innermost—and such seems to be the case—how did it get there? Of what vague and confused cognition — unconscious cognition without conscious recognition, please note that thoroughly—is this appetite the immediate effect? For without some cognition, no appetite. *Ignoti nulla cupido;* what isn't somehow known can't be anyhow desired.

A learned and pious friend of the present writer, full of good-will to the writer but dubious about the matter and anxious to have the writer's conception subjected to general scrutiny and criticism, suggests that one cannot do better than to republish, considerably revised and augmented, a "Note on Mysticism and the Super-natural" which appeared as an appendix to an article by the present writer entitled "Spinoza's Philosophy" in the *Fleur de Lis* of May, 1934, published at St. Louis University, a review conducted by undergraduates and, like all similar reviews, confined very largely to local circulation. The suggestion is a good one and will be followed.]

I. Mysticism is an ambiguous concept. In its strictest and most proper sense mysticism is the practise of the extraordinary states of prayer. These so-called "infused" states of prayer are not extraordinary in the sense of being miraculous although in certain cases they may have miraculous "accidents." Substantially, however, mysticism consists in that exercise of prayer by persons of a living faith in whom, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, faith is so energized by charity that it elicits the operation of the infused gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially the gifts of Wisdom and Understanding. These gifts exist in all who are in a state of grace and if their operation is extraordinary it is only because few, alas, dispose themselves properly and adequately by a devout

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and holy life to elicit the inspiration requisite for the operation of the infused gifts.

These extraordinary states of prayer and the somewhat cognate states of prophetical inspiration have their counterpart more or less in the extraordinary states of poetic or artistic activity, esthetic enjoyment, scientific invention and discovery, heroic energy and resourcefulness which are the portion of men of genius.

II. Speaking more inclusively but after all in a strict and proper sense, all personal religion is mystical which, to use Cardinal Newman's famous distinction, involves "real" and not merely "notional" assent to religious truths (theological propositions). "Real" assents owe their vividness, concreteness, psychological cogency to the fact that the assenting mind instinctively, or by a reminiscent effort, *recurs to the sense images proper to the concepts* with which it is thinking. Only those, for instance, who have had some laboratory or equivalent chemical experience can give a "real" assent to the proposition, "Water is H_2O"; others can give to this proposition only a "notional" assent.

Since God, the angels, the human soul itself, heaven, hell, purgatory, etc., are not objects of sense experience, our concepts of them have no proper sense images to which to recur and our assents to any propositions concerning these religious concepts can have no vividness, concreteness, immediate psychological cogency, unless the productive imagination is equal to the task of providing suitable surrogates, so to speak (let us call them *appropriate* images), for the strictly proper sense images which are necessarily lacking. The utterances of prophetical personages, the content of a prophetical tradition, or the teachings of a prophetical church may supply stimulus and provender to the imagination but the productive imagination of each one must respond to the stimulus, assimilate the provender.

The assents which are given to the propositions concerning God and the human soul (as an immaterial form) which are demonstrated in those branches of special metaphysics known as natural theology and rational psychology are as such purely "notional." Perhaps Cardinal Newman would have contended that they are in certain persons "real" assents, but he considered them not *per se* but *per accidens* as illuminated by what he calls "conscience"; and what Cardinal Newman calls "conscience" is by no means, as with the scholastics, simply the practical reason judging concerning ethical matters. "Conscience," as every student of Newman must, by now, realize (though Cardinal Newman did not perhaps quite realize it himself) is according to Newman virtually the practical reason under a mystical influence which is super-natural—a super-natural influence whose existence in every man we have to acknowledge when we consider human nature *historically* as Saint Augustine considered it and not simply *philosophically* as the post-Tridentine divines consider human nature, particularly since the controversies concerning Baius and Jansenius.

In order to distinguish it from the high mystical wisdom of the saints, that is from mysticism in the strictest and most proper sense of the term, let us designate this lower and *non-sanctifying* mysticism—please note that it is *non-sanctifying*—by the somewhat barbarous term mysticity.

In the matter then of religious assents the great question is the poet's question, "Survives imagination to the task?" Imagination will not survive to the task so far as all higher, non-superstitious and ethical religion is concerned, of that we may be sure, unless it is at least somewhat disciplined and purified ethically and under the influence of that mysticity whose existence I have just noted and of whose inward root in the soul I shall speak presently.

Faith is of course a believing upon testimony, a believing upon the authority of another judged to be competent and trustworthy. In the case of the first act of super-natural faith which any man makes—if that first act of faith be somewhat unrealistically abstracted from the habit of faith (the already existing habit of faith in the case of those baptized in infancy, the ensuing habit of faith immediately infused in the case of those whose first act of faith precedes the grace of baptism)—faith involves a purely notional assent to the material object of faith, that is, to the revealed truths; but in the judgment of this writer it is impossible to regard concretely (a) the act of faith with reference to its formal object, that is, God the revealer, or to regard concretely (b) the habit of faith otherwise than as involving a vastly indistinct and obscure *seeing* somehow—a seeing through a mirror enigmatically (*per speculum in aenigmate*)—of the objects of faith.

III. All religion (personal, social, internal, external) is super-natural to this extent at least: *it would not be what it is had there been no primitive or later super-natural revelations, and were not all men somehow inwardly predisposed to a super-natural end*—an inward predisposition that influences the whole cognitive, volitional and emotional life of every man for better or for worse according as he conducts himself with reference to it. This inward predisposition toward a super-natural end is natural to every man by birth (*ratione nativitatis*), that is, historically speaking, but it is, philosophically speaking, super-natural (*ratione disproportionis ad formam substantialem hominis*); it is super-natural by reason of its exceeding the capacity of the soul of a rational animal as such.

There is no purely "natural" religion; there might have been had men ever existed in the state

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of mere "nature" as merely rational animals, but they never have. There is a "natural" (i. e., rational) theology, theism. It is most useful but it is not religion; it is philosophy—a branch of special metaphysics which, as such and of itself, elicits purely "notional" not "real" assents. There are *false* religions, but even they are in large part materially super-natural and thrive in the long run chiefly by virtue of the super-natural element in them, in spite of the mutilation, distortion or perversion which this super-natural element has suffered in being taken over from positive revelation, primitive, patriarchal, Mosaic or Christian.

IV. *Mysticity has its root in every man in a concrete cognition of God as the somehow supreme but anonymous good of the soul; an obscure, non-conceptualizable, consequently unclarifiable cognition which is out of all proportion to the rational* (i.e., abstractively and discursively intelligent) *soul and which consequently has no intrinsic logical quality or value* (no ontologism here!).

The existence of this vague, concrete cognition of God as the soul's proper destiny and end is a matter of probable inference. Just as the existence of the active intellect (*intellectus agens*) is inferred in order to account for our supra-sensible function of abstracting universals from the data of sense-perception, so one infers the existence of this concrete supra-rational cognition of God as the supreme anonymous good of the soul in order to account for the disturbance, restlessness and tension which exists in the human will, a disturbance, restlessness and tension which cannot be accounted for except on the supposition that the will is drawn toward some concrete good of a supreme and unique quality.

No mere preoccupation with the abstract good-in-general (*bonum in commune*) is adequate to account for the monstrously exacerbated cupidity of the human will in men as men actually are. Men existing in the state of mere "nature" would have been far tamer, less passionate and more rationally behaved rational animals than men generally are as they live under the existing economy of Divine Providence whether in the state of fallen nature or even in the state of recuperated nature. *Philosophically speaking man is a rational animal; historically speaking he is a mystical animal*—mystical even in the exorbitance of his lusts!

I have said that the existence of this concrete cognition of God is a matter of probable inference. This needs to be explained. Were it not for super-natural historic revelation and Catholic theology we could not be certain that this root of mysticity in the soul is somehow an anonymous cognition of God, the soul's intimate Spouse and Home. We should merely be aware after careful analysis that the human will is subject to a disturbance prodigiously out of proportion to any good that man rationally cognizes. Mysticity then, though it is ontologically simply super-natural, is not intrinsically cognizable, so far as we are concerned, as super-natural.

The concrete, anonymous cognition of God which is the root and source of mysticity in the soul is perhaps a kind of *species infusa* like the infused species which, according to the theory of the divines, exist in the minds of the angels and which are the natural *media* of all their knowledge. This *species infusa* is all that is left us after the shipwreck of our original endowment by the Fall and accounts not only for our inward though confused predisposition to a super-natural end *but, strange to say, it accounts also for that "wild, indeterminate, infinite appetite" in us which theology* calls "concupiscence."

It is this complete, anonymous cognition of that which Francis Thompson magnificently celebrates in his sonnet "Desiderium Indesideratum" as

> the gain that lurk'st ungained in all gain
> the love we just fall short of in all love . . .
> the beauty that dost leave all beauty pain
> the unpossessed that mak'st possession vain—

it is this concrete, anonymous cognition of God, the Spouse and Home of the soul, out of proportion as this cognition is to all the rationalities and sensibilities of our nature as rational animals which is the very thing *which "corrupts" our nature by bewildering our appetites.* It is a perilous thing to have a concrete, supra-rational cognition of God without having that primeval "integrity of nature" lost by the Fall which alone would have enabled us to live up to this mystical cognition. It is, to use a homely comparison, like being afflicted with an all-consuming, insatiable champagne thirst—*an anonymous champagne thirst at that, ignorant of what it is thirsty for*—and possessing only a beer income. "Thou hast made us for Thyself" (that is, for being holy) "O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rest in Thee" (that is, in being holy). Our being holy and what it puts us in intimate participation of, namely, Being Holy—God—is what quenches without satiety the thirst of the human soul.

V. This mystical cognition, then, has no direct effect whatever upon the abstractive intellect and discursive reason but elicits in the will an infinite longing for a concrete but intellectually indeterminate end. This infinite longing stimulates the imagination to an infinitely restless search for some concrete object or group of objects capable of satisfying the infinite longing, quenching the insatiable thirst, stanching the incurable wound, of the will.

This search on the part of the imagination, when unbridled, unguided, is frequently the occasion of ruin and always more or less fruitless except in the case of certain religious geniuses

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

where the religious-ethical imagination is sometimes raised by divine grace to a dispositive efficiency[1] which evokes—in accordance with unchanging, unfathomable causal reasons, in accordance with the eternal nature of reality as a whole—the divine gift of prophecy, of revelation. For the rest of us—faith comes by hearing; by submitting ourselves to the prophet's message.

But the prophet's message is deeply colored, pervaded and permeated through and through by the prophet's personal idiosyncrasy and limitations as well as being thoroughly time-conditioned and place-conditioned by the prophet's era and environment. The Spirit of prophecy becomes "like the dyer's hand subdued to what it works in." It is a matter of distinguishing between the "flesh" or "letter" of his message—"the flesh which" of itself "profiteth nothing" and "the letter which" unduly pressed "killeth"—and "the spirit" of his message "which profiteth," "which maketh alive." For this task of discrimination no purely human faculty and no mere human being or particular group, not divinely assisted, is adequate; the task can only be performed with precision by the Church Universal with its divine *assistentia* and "solemnly" exercising its teaching office in the definition of dogmas; for the task of such exact and precise discrimination the "ordinary" teaching of the Church, though divinely assisted and infallible in its substance, is inadequate *precisely on account of its imprecision.*

Divine prophecy, then, like everything else in the universe, has its specifically invariable antecedents within the course of the created universe itself, though in the case of prophecy as in the case of miracles these requisite and adequate conditions are unfathomable; we cannot quite know what they are or just when and just why the accessions of Divine Light (revelation, prophesy) or Divine Power (miracles) strike into the universe from out the boundless deep of the Eternal. In the words of Browning, "All's Love yet all's Law"—a strange and terrible Love indeed to those who lack the humility to know how to lay their souls low and open them wide to take it in and the heroism to respond to its terrible, devastating yet fecundating thrust. *Our God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.*

> the Eternal is a jealous elf
> He wants the whole show for his pelf
> He eats up all that's not Himself
> *Jehovah-God is a consuming fire.*
> that all must burn is His decree
> heroes and saints in ecstasy
> riff-raff in rutting agony
> the whole world burn and all and He
> *the great* I AM *Himself is burning* FIRE.

It is not a tame universe but, by divine permission, wild—game-flavored as a hawk's wing.

This is no doubt the reason why men, made to copulate eternally—that is in the ever-present, timeless, spaceless depths of their own souls—with the Eternal Fiery Source of the whole blazing universe beyond the blazing ramparts of space and time can't, for the nice little parochial purposes of our earthly social life, be tamed. Mystical animals can't be tamed.

CRIME ROOM OF SCOTLAND YARD

By ALICE CURTAYNE

LEAVING the roaring Strand, one of London's principal traffic arteries, for the relative quietude of Pall Mall, and thence into the comparative silence of Scotland Yard, one receives an immediate impression of aloofness and vigilance. At one of the side entrances to the group of buildings called "The Yard," the cars of the Flying Squad officers are parked in readiness for action. Roomy and fast cars, each equipped with a wireless apparatus, and recognizable by every policeman on point duty, they stand prepared for the signal to speed through the densest traffic on their mission of defending the law and running to earth those who defy it.

Focus of perennial interest for all the Conan Doyles and the Edgar Wallaces of criminal fiction, with their enormous and avid reading public, Scotland Yard is imperturbable. Its efficiency derided and its methods scoffed at by both amateur writers and master craftsmen of romantic detective stories, this world-famous center of criminal investigation pursues its undeviating way.

The Crime Room is situated below street level, down a staircase of composite stone, with woodwork painted a dark and depressing green. Though the dust is removed every morning, it seems to collect again in a few hours. Through faintly begrimed windows, one catches glimpses of dreary flagged yards outside. A detective officer in plain clothes unlocks the door for us, ushers in the visitors, and then locks us in with him! There is a visitors' book, but one looks in vain for a woman's signature in it, save that of royalty.

[1] For the conception of dispositively efficient causality as being distinct from (a) simply efficient causality, from (b) perfectively efficient causality and from (c) instrumental causality, consult the writer's contribution, "How Miracles Happen," in THE COMMONWEAL of December 7, 1932.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lady visitors are not usually allowed into this Room, and I notice that I am not invited to sign the book! But this basement is the resort of crime specialists from all over the world, who make a detailed study of the exhibits. There are included in our group of visitors two naval officers, two detectives from the Canadian Mounted Police, and an Australian police officer.

The Crime Room really consists of three small rooms intercommunicating, with only one entrance, always kept carefully locked. It is low-ceilinged and the air is indescribably musty and stale. The Room is by no means laid out for visitors, in the manner of a museum; rather is it a den, a rough kind of storeroom, for police use only. The walls are closely hung with dusty revolvers, guns and knives of every description. The repellent exhibits are grouped closely on wide shelves that run along each wall, or set out in glass cases ranged along the center of the floor.

Our guide, with the incisive manner of a lecturer, begins on certain ropes hanging from the dingy ceiling. With one of them a famous hangman, who had—as a state official—dispatched many murderers in his time, afterward himself committed a murder and was hanged by the same noose which he had so often knotted for others. There hangs the grisly memorial.

Then we are shown a succession of deadly weapons disguised as innocent articles of daily use. The most striking is an efficient looking fountain pen, which is really a revolver and operates by only a slight pressure. This collection includes loaded walking-sticks and knuckle-dusters and an umbrella which was incidentally used to kill a man. In a brawl between two touts one pierced with it the other's eye, causing instantaneous death, as the point went through to the brain. The rusty ferrule shows the brown stain.

Our guide leads us to still more sinister exhibits. There stands on the floor the dirty, rudely-painted bath in which Joseph Smith, the famous bath murderer, drowned his victims, having previously insured their lives. There is a closed barrel in which another murderer actually pickled the head of his victim. We are shown fragments of the pajamas coat unearthed from under the floor of Crippen's cellar: torn pieces, now yellow with age, moldy and gruesome, they had been wrapped round the dismembered trunk of one of the victims. The retailer's name is pointed out to us on one of the torn pieces, this name forming a strong part of the circumstantial evidence that ultimately hanged Crippen.

Another case is opened and we bend over its contents: blood-stained razors, scissors and knives, the discovery of whose owners—or users—led to their execution. Other cases are filled with miscellaneous objects, personal and domestic, to each one of which is attached some story.

We are then conducted to an array of burglars' ladders, jemmies and skeleton keys, apparatus which could force an entrance to almost any type of house. Some of the folding ladders are rude in construction but surprisingly ingenious and dependable. We examine, with expressions of reluctant admiration, the ladder used by a famous London cat burglar. When folded up, it looks as innocent as a bandsman's folded music-stand, or even a few harmless lengths of stick retrieved by a careful carpenter from a job he had finished. We had imagined that daring and agility were the leading qualities of a successful burglar, but apparently ingenuity in devising and constructing his apparatus will carry him very far. And such goods are not marketed; they are made at home by their users, mute testimony to the deliberation with which a career of crime is chosen.

The last cases in the exhibition are filled with the stock-in-trade of counterfeiters, coiners and forgers. A man's signature and the forged counterpart are shown side by side, and are indistinguishable in the eyes of the average observer. False coins and counterfeit Treasury notes are shown with the molds, stamps and printing apparatus by means of which they are issued to an unsuspecting public. The Treasury notes are perfect in the minutest detail; the false coins are scratched and rubbed by their makers to give them a time-worn appearance. The gear for manufacturing this false money appears excessively simple. Our guide seems reluctant to explain the process to us, apparently deeming such knowledge unsafe for general circulation. He closes the case firmly against the eager questions, and diverts our attention to the articles used by cocaine traffickers, skilful in concealing their contraband in walking-sticks, shoes and such like.

The depression of spirits incidental to such a tour is lightened occasionally by some exhibit that tells of an amusing instance of fraud: the man who forged prize-winning cigarette coupons and furnished his house with the rich haul of prizes he secured before the fraud was detected; the tramway man who forged the tickets issued to passengers; the man who altered a three and six-penny postal order into an order for eight and sixpence, making perfect the small fraud, even altering the minute writing all around the edge.

Most exhibits in the Crime Room, save the weapons that dealt deaths of violence, testify to a cleverness, to an ingenuity, which, had it not been perverted but applied rather to some good end, might have carried the criminals equally far on a career of honor. It is strange to remark, however, that even the sharpened wits of the greatest criminal rarely succeed in encompassing all the circumstances of a crime, or safeguarding against all contingencies. There is always that odd twist to circumstances, unforeseen in rehearsals, or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the queer failure of some provision, which causes some clue to be left that ultimately fixes the guilt.

Numerous models of the scenes of crime, exhibited in court for the instruction of judge and jury, ultimately find their way into this Room, where they are preserved like macabre toys, like gruesome dolls' houses. We examined, among many others, the model of the hotel rooms in one of which Sidney Fox killed his mother. He had heavily insured her life, and his plan was to burn the suite of rooms, scene of the murder, so as to destroy all evidence. But the fire, although it raged fiercely and consumed the bed on which the murdered woman was placed, did not wholly consume her body. And marks of strangulation on the tongue proved the real cause of her death.

The last exhibits we were shown were the contents of a glass case, placed in a corner apart, one glimpse of which evoked whole successive chapters of Irish history, stirring and heroic and indescribably mournful. The case contains the tri-cornered black, gold-laced hat, braided coat, sword-belt and sword of Sir Roger Casement, hanged for the crime of high treason according to British law. Along with his insignia of office, there are exhibited a picture of the collapsible boat he used on his mission to Ireland, and the document containing his indictment and condemnation. Our guide passed on to other exhibits, and continued his tales, but I lingered at this case, pondering on the history it contained. I saw the once proud wearer of this sword tracked down to his hiding place in a cave near Tralee, a man cold, wet, hungry and in despair because of his failure. Efforts are being made to bring back the body of Roger Casement to Ireland, and it is not the only country in which the contents of this case would be venerated as honorable relics.

Several hours of a brilliant spring afternoon had now passed, and we were looking forward to a glimpse of sky and breath of fresh air. Everything is so dead in this Room; nothing lives in it, not even a fly. So slight a living thing as a wild flower, or a blade of grass, visible through the windows even, would relieve the oppressive tension. A study of the Fall of Man could hardly be made in more appropriate surroundings than in the Crime Room of Scotland Yard, but it is a study that grievously fatigues the mind.

When at last we were ascending again the basement staircase, the relief experienced brought passages of Dante suddenly sounding through memory: very much in the terms of our feelings now did he describe his ascent out of the "Inferno"! And I observed with an odd start that the Scotland Yard division of crime happens to be similar to the Dantean division of sins, which in turn was based on Aristotle's classification.

In Dante's "Inferno" too, one progresses downward from the region of carnal sinners, of the prodigal, the avaricious and the wrathful, to the grimmer regions where sins of violence against others are punished; thence, downward ever, to the circle of thieves; on to that of falsifiers and forgers; while the lowest pit of hell, that where Satan abides, is reserved for traitors.

The arrangement of the exhibits is not the only factor in this Crime Room inevitably recalling Dante. When the Florentine poet wrote the "Inferno" he had a double purpose in his mind: he desired, by means of a fiction, to describe the actual state, after death, of a soul dissevered from its Creator; but he desired also to describe the state of such a soul in this present life, when it is in mortal sin and so living in a moral hell of its own making. The fictitious account therefore clothes a real analysis of the moral hell in which a sinner lives, and this is by far the most interesting interpretation of the "Inferno."

The moral hell to which the sinner condemns himself is evoked with extraordinary vividness in an inspection of this Crime Room. One's ears ringing with the endless stories of criminals, all the faces of the unfortunates rise up before the mind's eye as the exhibits are examined: the lowering brows, the cunning looks, the malice that poisoned the wellsprings of their existence, their fevered days, the total absence of rest from their lives, the enforced secrecy, the exasperation in which they lived. The moral atmosphere is the very same as that savored by readers who accompany Dante through the tortuous windings of his "Inferno." There is experienced in this Crime Room the same sense of misery, the same lassitude, disgust and revulsion of feeling, the same great pressure of woe.

Whether the hapless men and women, whose lives are perpetuated in this grim museum, ever found rest in the Eternal Arms, is not for us to know, but they certainly experienced hell in this life—a moral hell of their own making. For in the world where grace has been rejected, in which grace is not, there is left an overwhelming sense of loss. The temple of the mind collapses in a sudden ruin, in a rapid decay. Life is filled with a sense of anguish that cannot be evaded.

The mystery of the revelation of hell is one with the mystery of iniquity encountered in the present world. Dante went to the uttermost limit to which any theologian dared go in describing the psychology of the damned: their ill-ease, their helpless self-centering, their anxiety expressing itself in some feverish and useless activity. This, too, is the sinner's psychology, for the damned but live on in the world which they experience in this life: a terrible world cut off from the orbit of grace; a world made by themselves for themselves, in which there is no good, no discipline of real work, no solace of aspiration, no comfort of genuine achievement.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMERICAN PAINTERS

By JAMES W. LANE

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART does right in giving us from time to time summaries of American painting. Its most recent show, which has held the attention of summer-time art-lovers and gallery-goers and will be seen again, has been unique in that (1) it has shown a dozen of our finest painters in a lighter mood (and in a lighter medium); and (2) it has been made possible by the generous gesture of one person—Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, jr., who is donatrix of every piece in the exhibition.

Thomas Craven has made readers of his "Modern Art" very familiar with the genre-first type of American painting, that painting which gets right down into the hubbub and moil of American life and unerringly reflects the *mores*. Salvador Dali, the egregious Catalonian, on the other hand, would lead the mind of the art-lover into the esoteric and "romantic" pastures of the libidinous ego, into beautifully painted but figuratively decadent pictures. Between the extremes of these kinds of art, between the extroversion of painting American life, indulged in by such painters as Sloan, Marsh and Curry, and the introversion of painters like Dali and Klee, much middle ground remains.

This is the ground that, on the whole, the American choices made by Mrs. Rockefeller tenant. The artists have "arrived." Only two of them, the youngest, Blume and Stuart Davis, have done things in that ultra-fantastic manner so ruinous to less disciplined or less distinguished talents; in other words, they are characterized not by bad taste but by good imagination. All of them manifest the quality, very different from the lurid isms of the sophisticated coteries in Paris, of dignity. The raucousness of ordinary life has been transformed by these artists into dignity or a more attractive energy. Managing to interpolate a sense of art between the thing seen and the actual product, they have known how to observe sanely, then to design with imagination.

Maurice Prendergast was one of the few American painters who grew to paint almost any scene in contemporary life with high artistic imagination. Prendergast, as his water-colors of the East River and of Venice here show, could probably put effectively in the same plane more figures than any other painter without their looking ridiculous. He was like Whistler in that, but not in his love of tomato red. Subsequent painters like Bellows, although Bellows painted the human form much less summarily, owed Prendergast a great deal in "esthetic crowding," yet, as in his "Under the Elevated," Bellows was not so successful in achieving it.

Prendergast died in 1924 and Bellows in 1925, at the age of forty-two. Bellows, in particular, is the man who, by his lithographs and oils, made our art infinitely more interesting—emancipating it from routine subjects like pretty maidens sitting in the sunlight sipping tea, academic still lifes, and insipid portraits. Bellows paved the way for the Thomas Craven type of art appreciation, showing bursts of American life in the raw—at prize-fights, in madhouses—but always in artistic arrangements.

With the exception of "Pop" Hart, who died in 1933, the other American painters in this Rockefeller collection developed in different styles. There is Charles Demuth, for example. In his early work, from 1910 to 1920, he paints loosely in water-color either scenes from real life (such as vaudeville) or illustrations for literature (such as Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw"). Naive, amateurish, and jellied the figures seem, but with 1920 the artist found a marvelously satisfying expression. No one, save Georgia O'Keeffe, has so much to say about flowers or fruit as Charles Demuth and no one, not even O'Keeffe, paints them more beautifully. His architectural pieces, like "In the Key of Blue" and "Stairs," are only apt to become fatiguingly geometrical. It is his flora, like "Corn and Peaches," which maintain a rightful geometry of design and are at the top of the list.

Preston Dickinson was before his death a fascinating arranger of architectural scenes—streets in old Quebec or Harlem River bridges—that made pleasing *grilles* or zigzags over his design. The result was substantial, as also in his still lifes, where a bottle with white wine, a banana and some plums would usually give him the opportunity of contrasting, as no one else quite could, the tones of luminous purple and yellow. In this collection he shines in pastel-work.

Much used to be said about order in an artist's work. Coventry Patmore used to speak of calm, too, and the point of rest. "Pop" Hart has perceptibly none. Yet, in his bravura selections from life, we do not miss order of a sort. He has given us, through power of draughtsmanship and suggestion, a vitality that is more important. Neither do Stuart Davis and Kuniyoshi put much store in precise arrangements. Their pieces in this collection show the value of imagination.

As for Peter Blume, the young winner of last year's Carnegie prize with his "East of Scranton," there are a good many things, including it, all definitely ordered, from his brush and pencil. In painstaking detail no one today surpasses him, as a look at the drawings, "Elemosina" and "Obelisk," could prove. What his arrangements, factually drawn though the individual components are, mean, is uncertain, but they are preferable, merely as paintings, to the subjective stuff with which Dali gluts us.

Hilaire Hiler, the Zorachs, Walt Kuhn and Karfiol round out this assemblage of American painters. The way of the American painter today is the way these twelve have chosen, for their art is interesting, vital and original, leaning neither to the eccentric, on one side, nor to the prosaic, on the other. It is an art considerably saner than that produced by many of their foreign brethren. Perhaps this is because American painting is younger than the European. It has not been so tautly guyed, has not tired of itself so early. It has been content to paint, unconverted by the perversions regnant in the salons of the sophisticates. Hence, although once pedestrianly factual, it has grown in popularity and its artistic quality in general is not to be meanly estimated.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—The fourteenth congress of Pax Romana, the international secretariat of Catholic students, was recently held at Prague. It was attended by 800 delegates from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Holland, Hungary, Mexico, Peru, Poland and Switzerland. The theme of the Congress was, "The new man in the new age." * * * Radio station WLWL, which is owned and operated by the Paulist Fathers, celebrated its tenth anniversary, September 24. * * * Since Catholic Action groups in Tientsin, China, decided five years ago, with the encouragement and approval of Monsignor de Vienne, C.M., Vicar Apostolic, to visit the inmates of the city prisons regularly, 349 prisoners have been baptized. At present more than 200 prisoners are receiving catechetical instruction. Mass was celebrated in the prison by Bishop de Vienne on the occasion of the first baptism. * * * John Giraud Agar, prominent attorney, who died September 20 at the age of seventy-nine, was a former trustee of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, trustee of the Catholic University of America, former Regent of Georgetown University, former member of the Board of Directors of the National Council of Catholic Men and a Knight of St. Gregory. * * * According to the *Bulletin de l'Union Catholique du Theatre* the Union now has more than 1,000 members including humble stage hands and renowned artists. The secretary-general, Maurice Brillant, says in his report, "Side by side with the distinguished savants, thinkers and writers who, in daily increasing regiments, hasten to the feet of Christ, the theatre should have its place, a prominent place; it has taken it." * * * In this year's "Drive for Fallen-away Catholics" the priests of the Diocese of Mobile, Alabama, visited 1,411 families comprising 5,044 individuals; 232 persons were baptized and 34 marriages were validated; 1,017 persons returned to the sacraments. * * * The solemn consecration of the Most Reverend Francis Xavier Ford, M.M., as Titular Bishop of Etenna and Vicar Apostolic of Kaying, China, at Maryknoll, New York, was attended by twenty-two members of the hierarchy. Bishop Ford was the first student to join the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America and one of the first four Maryknoll Missionaries to China. * * * John J. Bennett, jr., Attorney-General, has instructed New York State public welfare officials that by law they must furnish indigent parochial school children with whatever they need to enable them to attend school.

The Nation.—Final adjustment of the dispute between labor unions and the W.P.A. administration over wages seemed practically assured. In New York State the Federation of Labor called off the two-month's old strike affecting skilled laborers on W.P.A. projects. The basis of the compromise was said to be that the present $93.30 monthly maximum wage would be paid to the skilled workers on government-made jobs for 80 hours of work a month rather than 120 hours, which brings the hourly wage more nearly in line with the prevailing union rate. * * * To carry out the registration of manufacturers and the issuance of export and import licenses under the direction of the Munitions Control Board, a new Arms and Munitions Control Office has been established in the State Department. The Munitions Board at its first meeting drew up a list specifying what will be considered "munitions and implements of war" under the regulations of the Neutrality Act. The indications were that only articles clearly and solely for war purposes would be so classified and that border-line articles such as cotton or trucks which might be converted for war purposes would not be affected. * * * The President, following his acceptance of the resignation of Mr. Joseph P. Kennedy as chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, appointed as the new chairman, Mr. James M. Landis, member of the commisison since its inception and close cooperator with Mr. Kennedy in its work. Mr. Landis was one of the group of men who wrote the Securities Act of 1933 and the revised Securities Exchange Act of 1934. Among his first duties will be a meeting with executives of public utility companies to consider procedure in the administration of the Public Utility Act and to sound out to what extent the industrialists will seek to bar the provisions of the act, particularly the dissolution phases, by lawsuits. * * * Large movements of gold into this country were reported as hoarders abroad became apprehensive at the threats of war. * * * The American Liberty League issued a report of fifty-eight lawyers of the National Lawyers' Committee declaring it their opinion that the Wagner National Labor Relations Act was unconstitutional.

The Wide World.—Since last week, the Italo-Ethiopian controversy passed through many stages without reaching a definite result. The League conciliation committee drafted a compromise plan, which was submitted to both powers. It called for "assistance" from the League to effect the police, economic and financial "reform" of Ethiopia. "Special Italian interest" in the economic development of the country was recognized, and the governments of France and the United Kingdom offered "certain sacrifices in the region of the Somaliland coast." Both London and Paris grew uneasy over the outlook, and it was doubtful whether France, known to disapprove of military sanctions against Italy, would concur in the application of economic sanctions in case of a break. On September 21, the Italian Council of Ministers rejected the plan, stating that it did "not offer a minimum basis sufficient for a conclusive realization which would finally and effectively take into account Italy's vital rights and interests." On the next day Mussolini countered with de-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mands which, he said, must be granted before the attack on Ethiopia could be called off. He asked for "a large portion" of western Ethiopia, stated that any outlet to the sea granted Ethiopia must be a "corridor" to an Italian port, and insisted that control of such Ethiopian troops as were not disbanded must be placed in the hands of Italy. On September 23, the League conciliation committee decided that Il Duce's suggestions constituted a rejection of their services and disbanded. It was reported on the same day that the British Ambassador to Rome, Sir Eric Drummond, had called to suggest that Mussolini offer still another less drastic set of conditions. His Majesty's government had previously insisted that the presence of the British fleet in the Mediterranean did not imply a threat of aggression, but was the "natural consequence of the impression created by the violence of the campaign against the United Kingdom which had been conducted by the Italian press." As the League Council prepared to debate the problem, it was indicated that France and Great Britain were in accord excepting that M. Laval was counseling delay. * * * In the Philippines the election of President Manuel Quezon was contested by General Emilio Aguinaldo, who declared that Governor General Frank Murphy had been guilty of unfairness. The Quezon majority was, however, most substantial, the vote running more than three to one against Aguinaldo. In some places the aftermath of the election was bloody.

* * * *

The Eucharistic Congress.—The opening of the Seventh National Eucharistic Congress at Cleveland was marked by impressive ceremonies and popular enthusiasm. In the square outside the Cleveland railway terminal 20,000 people greeted the Papal Legate, Cardinal Hayes, upon his arrival, and 100,000 persons lined the streets along the way to the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. The Cleveland Public Hall proved inadequate for the throng that sought to attend the solemn pontifical Mass which formally opened the Congress, September 24; 30,000 people, unable to gain admission, heard the Papal Legate's address over loud speakers which carried his words outside into the streets. His Eminence spoke in part as follows: "The splendor, majesty and glory of the Divine Presence on the altar to Whom we make the 'good confession' of Saint Paul unite us with the 'cloud of witnesses,' who beginning in the upper room, the Cenacle of old, where Christ instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, have continued and increased throughout the ages. We are glorifying during these solemn days the upper room. This congress is no mere display of pageantry and pomp, commemorating an event of the dead historic past. Its majesty and sublimity rest essentially on the fact that the living Christ lives throughout all time and the upper room lives with Him. His Church has remained and shall continue to remain until the crack of doom, an essential part of the Cenacle that, once at Jerusalem, now follows the sun in its daily course from the rising to the going down thereof. . . . And from Christ at the Last Supper as a Eucharistic thanksgiving we received a new mandate of charity: 'A new commandment I give unto you; that you love one another as I have loved you. . . . By this all men know that you are My disciples if you have love one for another.' . . . May the congress prove a mighty prayer that the menacing clouds of war may be dissipated by the radiant splendor of the Prince of Peace."

Mexican Church Property.—The publication of the full text of President Cardenas's recent decree on the nationalization of church property makes it clear that it is one of the most drastic anti-religious laws ever enacted. According to Article I, "The following are the property of the nation, represented by the federal government: (1) any temple used at the present time for public worship, or which at any time since May 1, 1917, has been so used, as well as any that may be erected for this purpose in the future; (2) bishops' residences, rectories and seminaries; asylums or schools of religious asociations, corporations or institutions; convents, and any other building which has been built or used for the administration, propagation or teaching of a religious cult; and (3) real property, or any investment secured by mortgages on real property, held or administered by religious associations, corporations or institutions, whether directly or indirectly." If denunciation by a private person and reference to government documents regarding the property disclose "any evidence justifying the contention" that the property is being used for religious purposes, it "may be immediately turned over for use by the government." At this point the owner is to be notified and only when his property has been taken away from him by a "temporary order" is he allowed fifteen days to present his case for final decision before a government department. Final seizures of property "shall be neither revoked nor modified in any form. Nevertheless, new processes on the same property may be initiated provided the facts presented are posterior to the former order." Informers are to continue to receive a reward if the property they report on is nationalized.

Coal Strike.—On February 18, the Appalachian Joint Wage Scale Committee of 300 coal mine operators and coal miners met to arrange a contract to take the place of one scheduled to run out April 1. It ran out with no new contract agreed upon but was extended five times to permit further bickering. On September 23, the fifth extension expired, no new one was arranged and 400,000 miners in the soft coal fields all over the country walked out. The progress and effect of the strike was at this writing uncertain. Coal users had on hand the greatest stocks of soft coal since the Bureau of Mines started its statistics. The strike was completely effective in all United Mine Worker pits, and in most non-union and company union (largely "captive") pits. Only mines having contracts with the Progressive Miners of America were functioning regularly. A long strike, it was predicted, would lead Southern op-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

erators to try to eliminate unionization. Steel companies feared it would spread to their mills via their "captive" mines. If it advanced to this stage, industry in general would of course be immensely upset. But the points in dispute were narrowing to an extremely small financial sum. Original union demands were for a thirty-hour week, a year's contract, and the following wage adjustments: increase of $.50 a day for all day and monthly men; of $.15 a ton on cutting and loading rates; $.25 a ton on pick mining rates; 20 percent on yardage and deadwork rates. Operators demanded a renewal of the old contract with no changes, and for as long a period as possible. After seven months of negotiating and three days of striking, the bargaining stood as follows. Period of contract: Union, April, 1937; Operators, April, 1937. Day rates: Union, $.50 increase; Operators, $.50 increase. Cutting and loading rates: Union, $.09 increase; Operators, $.075 increase. Pick mining rates: Union, $.09 increase; Operators, $.075 increase. Yardage and deadwork rates: Union, 10 percent increase; Operators, 10 percent increase. Hours a week: Union, 35; Operators, 35.

The Memel Controversy.—During the early days of the Nazi régime, *billets-doux* passed between the governments of Germany and Lithuania. Ostensibly the second country was to constitute a unit in the bloc which the Goering faction believed could be formed against Russia. More recently however, nothing but hard words could be overheard, and the reason is the Memel territory. So bitter are Hitlerite denunciations of Lithuanian policy that many observers predict a *putsch* eastward if Mussolini should embroil the rest of Europe in war. The Memel question has a lengthy history. In accordance with Article 99 of the Versailles Treaty, the region—which formed the extreme northeastern tip of the German Empire—was internationalized, although a 1919 plebiscite resulted in a majority of 85 to 1 in favor of Germany. At first the government was international. At the time of the Ruhr invasions, however, Lithuanian troops occupied the region, which was thereupon placed under the sovereignty of Kovno. The League of Nations stipulated, however, that traffic must be international and that the rights of the population must be respected. A Memel Convention was signed after a conference of the powers during 1924. Since then conflict has been almost incessant, the resident Germans feeling that they were the victims of numerous discriminations. The controversy reached one boiling point when the rightfully elected ministry was deposed by the Lithuanian governor. Since the coming to power of Hitler, the situation has grown particularly acute. The Lithuanians feel that they are constantly in danger. Germany, on the other hand, declares that the Teutonic citizenry of Memel are victims of continuous persecution. In the background is the German desire to reacquire the region, while Lithuania is anxious to get rid of all international restrictions on its power and even—if possible—to obtain an additional slice of East Prussian territory.

Mr. Kellogg Retires.—The retirement, for reasons of health, of the Honorable Frank B. Kellogg from the Permanent Court of International Justice coincides with a time when the Pact to which his name is adjoined with that of Briand is meeting its severest test. When Mr. Kellogg became Secretary of State in the Coolidge Cabinet (1924), there was no apparent indication that this Middle-Western attorney would become passionately interested in the cause of international justice. But following a separate French bid for a treaty of friendship, he suggested that all nations should join in an agreement to outlaw war as a diplomatic instrument. Those on the inside declared at the time that Mr. Kellogg was guided in this matter by deeply religious motives—that, indeed, he expected the Pact to give the incentive for a thorough reconstruction of international morals. There was no provision in the agreement for action against an offender; and Mr. Kellogg expressly stipulated that national rights to self-defense were not to be infringed upon. The hope was that peoples concurring in principle might later be willing to determine more practical measures. During 1930, Mr. Kellogg became one of the Permanent Court Justices. Perhaps the most exciting case presented during his incumbency was brought up by Germany's attempt to effect a customs union with Austria. Justice Kellogg voted in favor of Germany, but the verdict was decided by votes cast by Justices representative of nations opposed to *Anschluss* in any form.

French Fiery Crosses.—Members of the Croix de Feu organization held a number of large and sudden rallies in different parts of France which were reminiscent of the tactics of the Italian Fascisti before their march on Rome. The largest of the meetings was held near Paris. Official estimate of the crowd was 80,000 but the correspondent for the New York *Times* thought that the number was probably closer to 25,000. Colonel François de la Rocque, the man who would be the French Mussolini, addressed his followers and attacked the Popular Front, which is a union of Socialists and Communists similar to the United Front in this country. Referring to the chain of workers' suburbs around Paris, he was quoted by the Associated Press as saying, "Our aim must be to shatter the Red ring. Even now every so-called suburb is being undermined by secret units of the Croix de Feu. Paris is always guarded by our forces. Today only a fraction of the Paris strength is represented here, while others remain in the city." He dwelt further on the necessity for peace, the iniquity of party politicians and the desirability of Nationalist rallies. The other meetings which took place at the same time as the one near Paris to demonstrate the national scale and discipline of the organization, which is largely composed of war veterans, were held in the vicinity of Lyons, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Clermont-Ferrand, and in Brittany, Angoulême and Algiers.

Hitler and Lenin.—Waldemar Gurian, whose treatise on Bolshevism (Sheed and Ward) has been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

widely read, presents a new volume, entitled "Bolschevismus als Weltgefahr," which analyzes the resemblances between the "system" prevailing in Russia and German National-Socialism. One passage may be quoted: "National-Socialism is essentially different from Fascism in that, like Russian Bolshevism, it takes the philosophical significance of politics seriously. Indeed the totalitarian demands of politico-social theory is taken more seriously and is adhered to more strictly by the Nazis than by the radical Marxists. . . . For the first reality is identical with the politico-social theory, and this is identified, metaphysically and theologically, with a given élite which is accepted as the organ of the noblest and therefore the rightfully governing race. Only this élite determine what is good or evil, holy or devilish. It is simply the fact that the traditional language of the Christian-civil tradition has been conserved by the Nazis, while Bolshevism has adopted a form of expression at once utopian and anti-traditional, which has blinded many to the fact that in Germany political power can become the central point of all existence. All forms of being—and so also religion—are viewed and used merely as possible means to expand and solidify power. When the word 'justice' is employed, the object is to unleash certain political passions. If a Nazi speaks of 'truth,' he hopes merely to persuade others that his own opinion is true. And the many references to a universally binding natural order imply only that Nazi rule is identical with that order." The book is published by the Vita Nova Verlag, Lucerne.

Against Excessive Drinking.—An educational campaign for temperance in drinking will be conducted by a newly organized Council for Moderation, Incorporated. Mr. Everett Colby is president of the group and it is backed by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, jr., and Mr. Edsel B. Ford. Political action will be avoided as Mr. Colby holds that efforts to enforce abstinence by law "always have and always will defeat their own ends." He also explained that the council will not attempt "to reform the drunkard who has already become addicted to the use of alcohol. He can only be dealt with individually as a social problem by agencies which are engaged in alleviating the conditions of wretchedness which follow upon excessive drinking. . . . The council proposes over a period of years to employ the best available educational methods to create an attitude of individual responsibility toward the use of liquor. . . . The council will not at any time attempt to define moderation in terms of amounts consumed; each individual must determine the matter for himself. The best rule for an individual is to learn what amount he can take with safety and always keep within, preferably well under, that limit. We think that total abstinence is a satisfactory way for many individuals to solve the liquor problem."

* * * *

The J. A. C.—In Tours, France, the first national congress of the Jeunesse Agricole Chrétienne opened September 7 with 4,000 members present. The J.A.C., the farmers' counterpart of the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne, has established 850 sections covering 2,000 French communes and has about 8,000 active workers. It publishes a fortnightly, *La Jeunesse Agricole,* which has about 27,000 readers, nearly all subscribers. The J.A.C. is a "circle, a service and a representative body," and is beginning to function somewhat as a youth organization for L'Union Catholique de la France Agricole. Its first job is to cultivate its own members, promoting their religious life and stimulating them to education and action in their own profession. Groups study all types of rural problems, the young peasants themselves analyzing and exposing precisely and methodically religious, social and economic elements. By studying, the members deepen their knowledge of their own social milieu, become more intimately connected with it and almost automatically act upon it. They promote and enter formal farm studies by correspondence courses, etc., and teach agricultural science. They seek a professional unity of the peasants and present united demands on practical issues. Most interest so far has been directed to the central problem of young farmers founding a home. They want to preserve or reconstruct the familial aspect of rural existence and work, assuring it its proper beauty, sense and social utility. This naturally leads to questions of women's labor, rural housing, hired help and periods of rest, and eventually to every sort of problem. The J.A.C. also conducts social services and attempts, by diversions, songs, theatres and sports, to add directly to the joy and life of the agricultural profession.

Housing.—The New Republic recently estimated that at the present rate it will take twenty-eight generations for the government to solve the bad housing problem. Agencies now consolidated in the Resettlement Administration have started or completed thirty suburban or rural projects. Before September, 1936, from three to five new low-cost suburban projects designed to house from 1,000 to 2,000 families, and possibly eight or ten smaller suburban communities providing for from 100 to 300 families, will be constructed. That is all. Building on occupied ground—real slum clearance—is centered now in P.W.A. which has only $100,000,000 available for the work during the next year. Federal stimulus to private housing is now furnished altogether by the F.H.A. This agency has on hand applications to insure mortgages on $365,500,000 worth of low-cost housing, but not so low cost as to constitute slum elimination. Its drive for private building is expected to produce from 175,000 to 200,000 rooms with rents running from $6.50 to $17. The National Association of Real Estate Boards, representative body of private operators, says that the government "has assumed the financing of about one-quarter of the entire mortgage debt of the nation." Fearing the immobilization of this debt structure and that in the event of business recovery money will avoid the real estate field, it urges the creation of a mortgage discount bank, privately owned and federally supervised, for coordinating mortgage policies and making mortgage papers properly liquid.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Play

By GRENVILLE VERNON

Few Are Chosen

DESPITE a few obvious howlers, this play dealing with the life of novices in a convent is a worthy addition to the very small number of Catholic plays which have been presented in a metropolitan theatre. It is sincere in design, reverent in spirit, delicate and restrained in writing, the characters clearly etched; though to assert that it gives a true picture of the life in an American convent would be certainly an exaggeration. It isn't that the characters are not true to life; it is simply that the percentage of misfits for the religious life is in this play ridiculously high, for, at the end, out of seven novices only two remain to take their final vows.

The story is a simple one, in fact it can scarcely be called a story at all. It deals with the spiritual and physical trials of seven young novices. One of these has had an unfortunate love affair and has entered the convent to free herself from the temptations of the flesh, but is pursued by the man who has made her unhappy and in despair walks out into a snow-storm and dies. Another leaves because she wants to marry and have children, another is forced to leave because she is afflicted with tuberculosis, a fourth goes insane, and a fifth decides she has no vocation. Miss Lawler, the author of the play, understands the trials of these five young women and expresses her understanding delicately yet effectively. All five characters live and breathe and suffer. That things would have in life turned out just as they do is another matter, for nowhere in the play is there any suggestion of any spiritual director, who would certainly have been able to resolve some of the tortures of spirit and would undoubtedly have prevented Sister Olivera's walking out into the snow-storm. Also the actions of the young women when alone seem at times more consistent with what might be expected in a boarding school than within the walls of a novitiate. Yet on the whole the play is well worth seeing and not offensive.

The performances and staging are excellent. Alma Kruger as Mother Mercy gives an impersonation of rare beauty and understanding. Ara Gerald by her sincerity robs of offense the tortured mind and body of Sister Olivera, and gives a poignant and tragic portrayal of the unfortunate young woman. Norma Downey gives a most human enactment of Sister Madonna, the novice who leaves because she desires a husband and children, and Mary Hone portrays the gathering insanity of Sister Emily with power yet restraint. Janet Pearsall as the young woman who reenters the convent after having tried the world is also most appealing in her simplicity. The play is directed by Gregory Deane, and directed with unusual taste. "Few Are Chosen," like "The First Legion," received small credit from the critics of the daily press, and if it is to continue it is evident that Catholics alone can save it. (At the Fifty-eighth Street Theatre.)

Life's Too Short

THIS is a play on the old theme of a boss who gives a poor clerk back his job in return for the clerk's wife's favors. It is made slightly more interesting by the fact of the present depression, at least in the first act, but later on it is just the old tale told again. John Whedon and Arthur Caplan are the authors, and they have given a perfectly lifelike picture of life in an office. The trouble is that their writing is as dull, even if it is as lifelike, as the characters themselves. We are interested in none of the people, except the office manager, and perhaps then only because the actor who plays it makes it more interesting than it really is in the writing. Happy the playwright to have an artist such as Leslie Adams in his play!

Mr. Adams in "Goodbye Again" and in "As Thousands Cheer" has shown himself one of the really consummate comedians of the American stage and he reinforces that impression in "Life's Too Short." He has that rarest of combinations, magnificent technical proficiency and a warm ingratiating personality. When he is on the stage he lifts the play out of its dullness to something near high-comedy. He is a sort of villain perhaps, but what a smiling likable villain! Let us hope his next play will be worthy of his powers. John Litel gives a most admirable performance as the little clerk despite the fact that nature made him for more robust parts. Miss Doris Dalton is equally admirable as the clerk's wife, and shows that since her appearance in "Petticoat Fever" she has made great strides in her mastery of detail. Priestly Morrison is excellent as the head of the Company. The play is directed by Jed Harris, who gets out of it all there is to be gotten. (At the Broadhurst Theatre.)

At Home Abroad

THIS is a review distinctly superior to the average run. It is superior because it is staged with taste, and because it has such superlative clowns as Beatrice Lillie and Herb Williams, such dancers as Eleanor Powell and Paul Haakon, and such an original monologist as Reginald Gardiner. Miss Lillie is always funny, and she has never been funnier than in her enactments of the English bar-maid, as the lady who comes into a shop to buy napkins or as the Russian dancer. And to hear her sing "Paree" is also worth the price of admission.

The review is written by Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz, and though there are occasional departures from good taste, it is on the whole far less vulgar than the usual New York review. That this hasn't hurt it is evidenced by the size of the audiences. And then there is young Mr. Gardiner. Mr. Gardiner is a newcomer to Broadway, but he will now always be welcome. Nothing more hilarious has been heard of late than his impersonation of a locomotive. He and Miss Lillie are a team hard to equal, impossible to beat. Mr. Gardiner is funny without ever stooping to ignoble means. In short, he is an artist. (At the Winter Garden.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Communications

AT HOME IN NEW ORLEANS

Clayton, Del.

TO the Editor: I have quite lost track of Claude Macksey's objections to Rachel Violette Campbell's contribution to the body of American knowledge concerning the American Negro, entitled "At Home in New Orleans" and published in THE COMMONWEAL, June 21, 1935. To Macksey's objections Lucy A. Stillman offers further objections. From these it appears that Macksey wrote to show the Negro's superiority to the white man.

Stillman denies this generally. The Uncle Tom type of Negro, when he has faith, hope, charity and a sense of humor, may be, is often, superior to the Millikan type of white man (presumably without the theological virtues and a ready grin). But a modern rising educated Negro who generally lacks these qualities cannot compete with any white man (Correspondent Stillman does not specify) to be as the white man, and win, any more than he can compete with the Indian or the Chinese in what makes an Indian or a Chinese what he is. It is unfortunate, however, that on this point Lucy Stillman withholds the light of her knowledge.

If I have interpreted this communication in its obvious sense—I am told that is one of the rules of good exegesis—then the statement of the case is as follows:

(1) A saint is better than one who is not a saint; even though the saint is a Negro. (Very generous, indeed.)

(2) If, instead of trying to keep up with the white man, or absurdly trying to outstride him, the Negro strives to develop himself along his own limited virtues and abilities such as longanimity and mending levees, he may ultimately show therein his superiority to the white man.

(3) In his rejoinder to Rachel Violette Campbell (presumably white) Claude Macksey (presumably black) has strayed far afield from the manner of Uncle Tom.

I answer:

To (1): This pronunciamento is neither original nor new. Any knowing Catholic will tell you it is an article of faith that the supernatural order is above the natural order. The mere fact that a Negro is concerned will not reverse the order until new doctrine is revealed to that effect.

To (2): The pigment of the skin (or the absence of it)—whereby a man with a pigmented skin is called black, a man with unpigmented skin is called white—is no index of mental capacity. There is neither logical nor ontological connection between the two. The sun burns the skin and darkens it, but cannot touch the mind and soul because they are immaterial, consequently, intangible. This should be clear to every child who understands, for example, that Tom Mix riding his horse full speed ahead will not jump out of the screen and trample them. They are in two different worlds. A white man who has been forced to a life of mending levees will have a better grasp on the technique of mending levees than any Negro who has not been so constrained. Conversely, any Negro with equal antecedents, opportunities and mental acumen can master languages and sciences as well as any white man with the same antecedents, etc., and better than a white levee mender. Try as he may, man (white or black) will never construct as geometrically flawless a honeycomb as does the bee, predict weather or find direction as unerringly as migratory birds. These abilities are naturally instinctive to these animals. Not so is levee mending to the Negro, or the mastery of languages and sciences to the white man. At least such has not yet been proved.

To (3): Stillman urges politeness under the cloak of Christianity. Christianity had no need of polish. All it needs is to be really and truly Christian.

What, then, is the issue? What is Lucy A. Stillman's difficulty?

HAMILTON HYDE.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: It is unnecessary to controvert in detail the statements contained in the communication of Lucy A. Stillman (September 6) replying to the letter of Claude Macksey (August 16), except to point out her failure to recognize the phenomenal progress of the Negro, despite the many discriminations set up by prejudice and indifference to block his path.

Obviously, the writer overlooked the fact that the article to which Mr. Macksey was replying was replete with ridicule of education for the Negro, and of his striving for a better status than that of "the old-time ignorant lowly Negro." Very fittingly, it seems, Mr. Macksey adopted the same "whimsical vein" in his pungent satire.

The attitude of Lucy A. Stillman recalls an interview with an editor of a well-known secular weekly, who admitted authorship of a lampoon aimed at the idea of higher education of the Negro and recounted certain alleged "pretensions" of Negro collegians. When asked about the source and extent of his knowledge of the matter and of his contacts with educated Negroes, he confessed with intellectual embarrassment that he had "never even met a Negro college student or graduate"! And yet in his article he had not hesitated to attack the "grotesque futility" of college education for the colored race.

Unhappily there are many who would circumscribe the Negro to the tasks of "mending levees, cooking, singing, etc." Certainly, no Catholic can find any justification or authority in the doctrines of the Church for such an attitude. Your correspondent will find that the Catholic Church not only insists upon the essential equality of all mankind in their natural dignity, in their destiny, their immortality, in the right of each to recognition by all their fellow beings, but desires "that the poor, for example, should rise above poverty and wretchedness, and should better their condition in life" (Pope Leo XIII). In his recent encyclical on Christian education, Pope Pius XI says, "Man, endowed with a social nature, is placed here on earth in order that he may spend his life in society, and under an authority ordained by God, that he may develop and evolve to the full all his faculties to the praise and glory of his Creator."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Three years ago, Xavier University, the only Catholic college for the education of Negro youth, was solemnly dedicated by Cardinal Dougherty, Archbishop Shaw and Bishop Gerow. Xavier was made possible by the vision and generosity of Mother Katherine Drexel, the foundress and superioress of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. In addition to Xavier, this order maintains thirty-one elementary and secondary schools for the education of the colored. On the occasion of this dedication, Pope Pius XI addressed a letter to Mother Katherine Drexel and her sister, Mrs. Edward D. Morrell, in which His Holiness said in part, "Your present project is so excellent, so replete with Christian charity, that not only do we heartily approve of it, but we deem it worthy of our highest praise."

Today, education is an indispensable need, as well as a right. Ours is not a primitive but a complex and highly competitive civilization in which it is obviously necessary that the Negro, like every other American, be adequately equipped with education in order to exist.

EDITOR, *Interracial Review*.

LESSONS FROM WILLIAMSTOWN

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: As one of the Catholic speakers at the Williamstown Institute of Human Relations, may I be permitted to offer some further comment on your very penetrating editorial in the issue of THE COMMONWEAL for September 13?

Your complaint that some preparation was needed to meet the speech of Ramon Beteta, in which he attacked the Catholic Church, seems to me to be beside the point. As a matter of fact, I had secured from the Reverend Joseph F. Thorning, S. J., a rather full analysis of Beteta's speech at the Charlottesville Institute of Politics, held earlier in the summer, and had it before me at Williamstown. It is irrelevant that Beteta did not repeat his Charlottesville speech in most respects. What seems to me to be the important point is that at Charlottesville Beteta's speech was entirely in order: that was an open forum in which the purpose was to allow each speaker the fullest latitude of criticism of any country or institution, in exactly the same way as was allowed in the former Williamstown Institutes of Politics. At Williamstown this year, I submit that Beteta's speech was out of order. The purpose of the new Institute of Human Relations was not to debate the merits of any country or institution: it was to recognize points of conflict in various areas arising from religious differences and to attempt in a spirit of mutual charity to find some satisfactory solutions.

These were the rules of the meeting, as I understood them. I think that these two facts should be recognized: that we Catholics loyally attempted to abide by these rules, in the face of great provocation; and that by doing so we were necessarily placed at a great disadvantage. But we were not called upon, as I have said elsewhere, to defend the Catholic Church in Mexico as if it were some great criminal, and, moreover, I am convinced that short of a two-hour speech in rebuttal it would have been, before that unprepared audience, impossible to answer Beteta's arraignment satisfactorily. Reckless charges can be made in five minutes that may take a book to answer. In agreeing to refuse to answer Beteta in detail, I am still convinced that we Catholics lost nothing. In fact, it would have wrecked the conference if we had done anything else; and we, not the attacker, would have been blamed.

The lesson would seem to be that in future speakers like Señor Beteta should be instructed fully in the purposes of the conference, and once instructed forced to comply with the rules. He, like many others present, apparently thought they were still present at the old Institute of Politics.

REV. WILFRID PARSONS, S. J.,
Editor of America.

THE CALL TO THE CROSS

Syracuse, N. Y.

TO the Editor: In your editorial of September 6, you stated that the question now before the world is "Christ or Caesar?" This is certainly in line with the reigning Pope's thought when he stated some time ago that the solution of our problems was not through money, but through prayer—through Christ, not through Caesar.

So far, so good. But I was rather surprised when I read on your next page of "Alberta's Opportunity." An opportunity to solve our problem through money! Some place in the Bible, there is a statement about the pursuit of gold being a stumbling block and that every fool shall perish by it. The history of countries trying to solve their problems through issue of money shows that they perished through disastrous inflation.

I cannot but feel that we are confused as to causes of our trouble and what we need is enlightenment—and prayer is one path to enlightenment. Another is through analysis of facts.

Twenty years ago, 6 percent of our national income constituted government expenditures—today, they represent nearer to 40 percent. Such a high percentage means that too many are employed in non-productive work making it impossible for capital and labor engaged in productive labor to carry on.

More government means a still higher percentage of income for non-producers at the expense of the producers. So I am not looking to Caesar but I hope that we may be enlightened and then that we may muster enough moral courage to make the necessary sacrifices to remove the legal obstructions to the forces of nature that are waiting to serve us in abundance.

PAUL HUEBER.

CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: In your edition of September 20, page 495, you erred in announcing that the annual meetings of the National Conference of Catholic Charities would be held in Cincinnati. The meetings will be held in Peoria, Illinois.

EDMOND J. BUTLER.

Editorial Note: This slip was corrected in our issue of September 27.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books

The Story of Worship

An Outline of Religion, by E. R. Appleton; with a Foreword by the Reverend S. Parkes Cadman, D.D. New York: H. C. Kinsey and Company. $5.00.

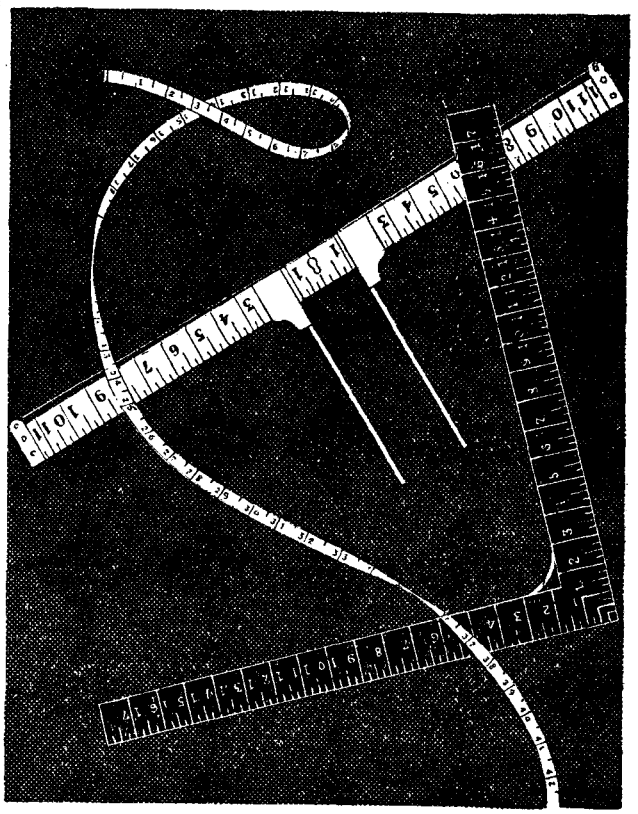
A History of Religion, by Herbert H. Gowen, D.D. Milwaukee: The Morehouse Publishing Company. $3.50.

SOMEWHAT similar in conception, these two books differ widely in the manner of their execution. Mr. Appleton's book is frankly and earnestly apologetic. He commences his discussion with a wish addressed to his hearers: "When you have reached the end of this book, and well thumbed it all and worn it out, as I hope you will, then my greatest wish is that it may have helped to bring new life to you." The key to the real purpose of the author and to a full understanding of his book is to be found in the fact that for many years he has had a weekly broadcast, "Sign of Fellowship," each one of which brought him thousands of letters. In this fashion he has come to know what the average English listener is thinking about and what he is capable of understanding regarding the meaning and history of religion. In this book he gives a short outline of religious history from which, as far as possible, questions of a speculative or controversial character are strictly excluded. He finds good in all religion, but insists that the soul of mankind, thirsting for the peace and security that religion alone can offer, finds its fullest satisfaction in Christianity. The author is somewhat eclectic in his outlook and has a place in his scheme for such manifestations of the religions spirit as faith-healing and sees a broadening scope for religion in the future. "Once upon a time the priest was the doctor; tomorrow the doctor may well have become the priest in a new sense of the word."

Dr. Gowen's book is planned and written in a strictly scientific spirit. He makes no secret of his predilection for the Christian religion, and to avoid any misunderstanding, he says: "I wish to confess here and now that the present volume is conceived unashamedly from the Christian point of view." It is, perhaps, because of the Christian point of view that the author has been able to write so objectively and dispassionately. As an evidence of the growing preoccupation of the world with things religious, it is significant to note the pains with which he strives to arrive at a definition of religion, and to bring religion out of the backwater into which it had been driven in the nineteenth century by those who had defamed it as mere emotionalism or shadowy sentimentality. Religion touches on all vital human activities, social and spiritual, and opens the way to innumerable digressions into other fields, but Professor Gowen has clung closely to his theme and, within the compass he allowed himself, he has given a well-articulated history of religion as it is revealed in the lives of the most primitive as well as the most cultured. Many problems are touched on without being elucidated. The author's reticence might be accounted for on the ground that detailed

B. ALTMAN & CO.

FIFTH AVENUE 34TH STREET



men's custom shirts

6.00 and upward

our new selection of fall shirtings has just been received, and our workrooms on the premises are ready to give you service of the highest type in shirts made-to-your-measure.

men's furnishings—main floor

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Next Week

ANTI - WAR - PROFIT LEGISLATION, by Elizabeth M. Lynskey, is a careful, factual description of the steps which have been attempted and which have been taken to keep this country out of the next war, to prevent our nationals from providing war supplies to belligerents and to remove the incentive toward war of war profits. The essential conclusions of the senatorial inquiry into armament sales are enumerated and the arguments both for and against the means proposed for maintaining American neutrality are given. . . . MR. ABERHART ANALYZED, by Henry Somerville, well-known Canadian editor and writer, examines the strange political and economic experiment embarked upon by the citizens of the province of Alberta under the spell of a Calgary radio-evangelist. The latter has promised his supporters a home-made social credit scheme whereby every adult citizen will receive a $25 a month "basic dividend" as his, or her, share of the "cultural heritage" and a variety of other appealing marvels will be brought about by methods which his followers are bound to take on trust and without arguing. . . . THE KENTUCKY CATHOLICS, by Sister Mary Joseph Winters, recalls the first valiant group of Catholics who 150 years ago went into the wilderness of Kentucky to make their homes and raised the first Christian altar in the state, and tells of the little-known individuals who preceded them and of the early missionaries of the region. . . . THE CASE OF SEAN O'CASEY, by Sean O'Faolain, is a sensitive and intellectual estimate of the things that drove the playwright of "Juno and the Paycock" into exile from Ireland and the consequent loss. It is a pity, says Mr. O'Faolain, that O'Casey has not long ago returned to Dublin, where life is in harmony with his art and he would have a public moved by sympathy rather than curiosity.

philosophical explanations are not germane to his main purpose. About one-third of the book is devoted to the Christian religion. The author is not hostile to the Church, though at times some of his quotations from unfriendly sources would have more point were they supported by exact references. The concluding chapters, "On the Threshold of the Future" and "Beyond the Veil," are among the most interesting of the book. The author admits there may be some justification for the pessimists who say, "Religion is now on its last legs," but he remarks people have been saying the same during the last few thousand years. Science and scepticism will have to be reckoned with more actively in the future, but they can be met by a firmer and more positive assertion of the fundamentals of the Christian religion.

PATRICK J. HEALY.

The Greatest Chancellor

Thomas More, by R. W. Chambers. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.50.

THIS is the book of an assiduous scholar who has during thirty years been hunting for and examining every possible record that throws any light on the career and character of him whom we now call Saint Thomas More. To a tentative reader who opens it at this page and then at that page, it will seem to be the charming conversation of one who really knows what he is talking about, who is sure of his details, who tells how this biographer erred, how this truth was discovered—in short, who though he sometimes talks "shop," yet does it entertainingly.

But the reader who reads a half, or a quarter, or an eighth of the book is repaid a thousandfold more richly, by the enthusiasm—calm and conscious and wise—that he discovers for Thomas More in this professor of English at University College, London. Here is a rectification of errors that held that More was a "pseudo-liberal," a man who changed his views as his arteries hardened. Professor Chambers has made himself the special champion of More's consistency, and if it seems strange that during almost four centuries the most striking trait of More—his consistency—was the one trait which he was thought to lack, it is at least consoling to be able to say now that since Chambers has spoken More's consistency is so obvious that argument is not necessary.

Chambers is a professor of English, not an historian of political affairs, civil or ecclesiastical, and it was by reading More as a student of Middle English that he got his first inkling of More's true mood, of where his consistency lay, for he read More, and read More's "Utopia" in the light of his other writings. Gradually there emerged to Chambers the complete view of More, which he alludes to on page 359, when he says: "More, then, connects medieval England with modern England, and he connects England with Europe."

Chambers is not a Catholic—although he has a reverence for Catholic devotions even in their homeliest forms, which we are not used to in the proud professors of fifty years back—and the consistency that he admires in More

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is not his Catholic faithfulness, although that too he admires. He is won by More's love of unity, which he holds to be medieval, and by his twofold opposition to greedy commercialism and to the omnipotent state, which opposition he also holds to be medieval. "And so, from the point of view of the new age of Machiavellian statesmanship, and commercial exploitation, Utopia is old-fashioned." So says Chambers on page 132. And he says similarly on page 266: "From Utopia to the scaffold, More stands for the common cause, as against the private commodity of the single man, or even the single kingdom. He will not accept the new statesmanship which regards the nations as totally independent," gladiators in the European arena, "and which makes one nation look on with complacency, and almost with satisfaction, at the prospect of another being destroyed by the Turkish hordes."

Let us call this a most gratifying book. If Chambers at times makes it seem that More died merely for the sake of European civilization, what of it? We all as Catholics know some spiritual truths, which unite us especially to More. What we do not know—not many of us Catholics—is how to envisage English history as he has envisaged it, seeing the disaster to English culture that Henry caused, his robbing of hospitals and places of learning, his cutting away of the poor from what was almost their own, the monasteries. No, more than that, Chambers partly by his acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon civilization has caught sight of a complete history of England, such as very few Catholics in the past "provincial" days have been able to see. It is he—not a Catholic—who expresses his bewilderment that such a learned man as Trevelyan would write a history of England and not mention Saint Boniface. Professor Chambers's book may not be the beginning of a new era in the writing of English history, but after his book has been written, those who have not read it, and go on writing as before, like a Trevelyan or even an H. A. L. Fisher, will seem most dismally old-fashioned.

DANIEL SARGENT.

The Mystery of Woman

The Wish Child, by Ina Seidel; translated by G. D. Gribble. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.75.

SOMETIMES the mystery of woman is revealed by woman, though in each case the enlightenment seems to hold good only for a given race and time. I believe that Ina Seidel's fine novel manages to say—a little too broadly, perhaps, but none the less with distinction—the many things which German literature has been attempting to voice on this great subject. Cornelia is an individual, but she is also (in the complete sense of that word) a sex. "In her, too, there was no feeling that was not ready to blaze into passion . . . but she had betimes realized this barbaric strain in her nature and had tamed and tempered it by constant watchfulness." How and why she insisted upon gaining such a victory is possibly the theme of the huge novel, as it is the subject of "Kristin Lavransdatter."

LONGMANS BOOKS

The former dramatic editor of the COMMONWEAL *writes—*

EUGENE O'NEILL

A POET'S QUEST

By Richard Dana Skinner

Stark Young, author of *So Red The Rose* and drama critic of the New Republic, writes: "This book is unique among the writings on Eugene O'Neill. For the first time a special element in O'Neill that is his strongest inner force is studied, traced through its developments, and deeply felt and understood." $2.00.

CHRISTIAN ART

By Charles Rufus Morey

The five principal phases of Christian art: The Greek, the Byzantine, Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance. "Should be included as required or collateral reading in every course in mediaeval art in the country."—*Dr. Walter W. S. Cook, Chairman, New York University Fine Arts Graduate Center.* *Illustrated.* $1.75.

NEW YORK TORONTO

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO · 114 Fifth Ave. N.Y.

College of New Rochelle

NEW ROCHELLE

Westchester County, New York

Conducted by Ursuline Nuns

✦

International Standing

Accredited by the Association of American Universities

✦

Art, Commerce, Home Economics, Journalism and Sociology.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS ABROAD

An International Quarterly
of
Comment on Foreign Books

Edited by
Roy Temple House and Kenneth C. Kaufman

The magazine will offer in its Autumn Number (out October 1) a significant list of articles, among which will be "Nominations for the Nobel Prize for Literature," presented by such distinguished writers and critics as H. L. Mencken, Arthur Livingston, Burton Rascoe, Joseph Wood Krutch, Marquis James, Sinclair Lewis, George Jean Nathan, Albert Guérard, and Sherwood Anderson. It will contain, in addition to its reviews, the following:

The Legend of Italian Skepticism
Count Carlo Sforza

The Publishing Industry in Japan
Shio Sakanishi

Shakespeare and a Poor Swiss Peasant
Roy Temple House

Mihaly Babits
Joseph Remenyi

Women Writers of Ecuador
Victor M. Rendón

Gustave Lanson as a Student Saw Him
Margaret D. Miller

And Other Articles and Departments

Subscription rates: $2.00 a year, or $3.00 for two years. Single copies 50 cents each. Address the Circulation Manager, *Books Abroad*.

University of Oklahoma Press
NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

But Ina Seidel lacks the pungent, ultra-modern bitterness of Sigrid Undset. There is more of Leibnitz in her character than of Kierkegaard. The book is possibly comparable to a Brahms "Requiem," deeply and unsentimentally sad without being deprived of a constant, all-pervading sunshine. Accordingly the historical background is an advantage, being hardly more than the counterpart of a conventional form in music. The cosmopolitanism of the Napoleonic era, beset with nationalistic waves of increasing intensity, serves to heighten the relations between characters already naturally in conflict. It helps the panorama of life to be set forth as a panorama of time.

For this is, after all, only the story of a mother and two children, one of them her own. It may be that little Christopher is Germany and little Delphine France, forever yearning to be together and forever torn apart. One almost overlooks the possibility, so real and entrancing is the blossoming and withering of these two. The author is no mere chatter-box reporting cute sayings by a couple of kids. She evokes as few have done the mystery of boyhood and girlhood—the depth which surfacy things too frequently conceal. And she regards them both as universes thrown upon the shore of maternity, where broods that sun Wordsworth beheld so clearly and then missed.

It would almost have sufficed to tell the story of such children. The wholeness of Ina Seidel's purpose is revealed, however, in the rich canvas devoted to Cornelia's life. This compound of love, passion, wonder, perplexity, sacrifice, friendship, loss and religious confidence has the texture of—I can only return to that—well-integrated music. It is described with an extraordinary melodiousness and convincing fidelity. The German novel has sometimes, and doubtless often correctly, been accused of harboring too much poetic ambition. Sometimes, as at present, this ambition does not overreach itself. Here is an unusually good book.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

Peace through Plenty

Nations Can Live at Home, by O. W. Willcox. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. $2.75.

AMERICANS perplexed by surpluses of corn and potatoes may doubt the usefulness today of a science which, by proper control of moisture and all the other factors of crop growth, claims it can multiply the productivity of the soil tremendously. However, the potentialities of agrobiology for "have-nots" like Germany, Italy and Japan are deserving of serious consideration by every ardent advocate of peace. The author maintains that because of the uncertainties of foreign trade autarchy is not so much economic jingoism with a view to war as a condition essential to the well-being of a nation at peace. In a number of cases actual yields of basic crops have reached a point from 27.4 to 100 percent of their highest theoretical yielding power and the agrobiologists have a simple mathematical formula which indicates that it is possible to support a population five or ten times that of the most densely populated area of the earth. Science proves that under identical conditions identical results

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

will be produced—and the agrobiologists can reproduce these conditions. Even Japan with .36 of an acre of arable land per inhabitant could on its own soil "more than double the comfort of their present population and . . . take care of their new generations for many years to come." For Italy with 1.27 arable acres per inhabitant it would be relatively easy to relieve the pressure of the population without any territorial expansion.

Mr. Willcox makes a generous discount for inefficiencies and even if further allowances are made it seems undeniable that productivity can be multiplied to such an extent that the world need no longer fear the bogey of overpopulation. How can the principles of agrobiology be put into operation, though, when even in Japan an attempt to introduce them was a failure? For immediate results more regimentation seems to be the only answer, since expert supervision is required and farmers are proverbially conservative and independent. The new technique could best be introduced and enforced under a totalitarian dictatorship; other nations must rely on the painfully slow processes of education.

EDWARD S. SKILLIN, JR.

Two Women

The Partnership, by Phyllis Bentley. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.00.

THE INTEREST of the public in Miss Bentley's "Inheritance" and "A Modern Tragedy," written and published in 1932 and 1934, has caused the republication of this earlier novel, first published and indifferently received in 1929. It will, however, be difficult for even Miss Bentley's most enthusiastic readers to discover in "The Partnership" many intimations of her subsequent distinction.

The partnership of two women—a partnership in that the story of one would have been impossible without the other—supplies the single narrative and moral thread of this long short story. It concerns only the entrances and the exits, and, withal, the perpetual interaction of Lydia and Annice. Without Lydia, Annice's loves, her children, indeed, her rich, exciting but unmoral life would have been impossible. Without Annice and her exploitation, the highly moral Lydia would not have lost the only real living within her reach. A partnership indeed, calculated to provide desire gratified to only one of the two unwittingly allied.

Miss Bentley concentrates so unmitigatedly upon her two protagonists and the moral they bear that her tale is not only thin, but didactic. As excellently, as roundly, as she presents the lineaments of her partners, she yet manages to protrude herself, a *deus ex machina,* all too obviously. Miss Bentley is so intent upon driving her moral that her characters become all too patently fictional examples to embroider rather than to generate her homily.

Readers impressed by the opulence, fine proportions and convincing, broad significances of Miss Bentley's more recent Yorkshire sagas will be interested in "The Partnership" only because of its surprising disparity with these.

LUCY L. TOMPKINS.

Representatives Wanted

A well-established Catholic organization wishes cultivated men or women with large acquaintance to act as local representatives in larger Catholic communities. No representatives ever employed before. Liberal commission will enable earnest workers to make this a normal income.

WRITE BOX 100 . . . . . THE COMMONWEAL

TRINITY COLLEGE
WASHINGTON, D. C.
An Institution for the Higher Education of Women
Conducted by the Sisters of Notre Dame of Namur. Accredited by the Association of American Universities. Graduates eligible for membership in American Association of University Women.
For particulars, address
THE REGISTRAR OF THE COLLEGE

A Missionary Week-end Combining Charity and Pleasure
The Maryknoll Sisters' Annual Bazaar
will be held at their Motherhouse
Maryknoll (Ossining) New York
OCTOBER 11th and 12th
Oriental novelties for early Christmas Shopping
Home-made preserves, candies, foodstuffs
Special attractions for children
A booth for men
Japanese tea will be served Friday afternoon
Chinese dinner and supper, Saturday
Round-trip Bus Reservations Available Through
MRS. M. J. CONNAUGHTON Wickersham 2-6871 — Friday and Saturday from New York
MRS. J. E. MURPHY ATlantic 5-7109 — Saturday, from Brooklyn and New York

ENORMOUS

It is very desirable for the expansion of the much needed work of our Board, which has already aided medically about 1,000 mission stations, conducted by nearly 100 Religious Communities, to enlist more friends to make contributions to its funds and thus to share in the merits of the work. The memberships are as follows:

Founder $1,000.00
(Payable in full, or $200 a year for 5 years)
Patron 500.00
(Payable in full, or $100 a year for 5 years)
Benefactor 100.00
(Payable in full, or $25 a year for 4 years)
Life Member 50.00
(Payable in full, or within one year)
Associate Member .....(a year) 5.00
Ordinary Member .....(a year) 1.00

we offer you a share in this work so enormously fruitful according to the testimony of many missionaries.

Please Send Your Membership to:

Rev. Edward F. Garesche, S. J., President
The Catholic Medical Mission Board
10 West 17th St., New York, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

College of Notre Dame of Maryland
Charles Street Avenue, Baltimore, Md.
A Catholic Institution for the Higher Education of Women
Affiliated with the Catholic University of America
Registered by University of the State of New York and by the Maryland State Board of Education. Accredited by the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Middle States and Maryland. Member of the America Council of Education. Courses leading to the Degree of Bachelor of Arts. Address Registrar.
NOTRE DAME PREPARATORY SCHOOL
Resident and Day Pupils *Address Secretary*

ROSEMONT COLLEGE
Rosemont, Pa.
Conducted by the Religious of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. A College for Catholic Women. Incorporated under the laws of the State of Pennsylvania with power to confer Degrees in Arts, Sciences and Letters. Junior year abroad. For resident and non-resident students. Situated eleven miles from Philadelphia on the Main Line of the P. R. R. *Address Registrar*

ACADEMY OF ST. JOSEPH
IN-THE-PINES
BRENTWOOD, LONG ISLAND
Boarding School for Young Ladies
(Preparatory Collegiate) Affiliated with the State University
Complete Courses in Art, Vocal and Instrumental Music
EXTENSIVE GROUNDS, LARGE CAMPUS, ATHLETICS
HORSEBACK RIDING
ADDRESS: MOTHER SUPERIOR

GOOD COUNSEL COLLEGE
White Plains
WESTCHESTER COUNTY NEW YORK
Conducted by the Sisters of the Divine Compassion
Fully Accredited
Standard courses in Arts and Science, pre-medical
Journalism, teacher training, secretarial studies, library science, fine arts.
Unusually beautiful location. Extensive campus.
Forty minutes from New York.

MT. ST. MARY-ON-THE-HUDSON
Newburgh, New York, offers your daughter
1. Training for character and health in an atmosphere, healthful, distinctive, Catholic.
2. Intellectual standards accredited by the University of the State of New York and the Association of the Middle States and Maryland.
3. Modern fireproof buildings.
4. Sixty-eight acre camps overlooking the Hudson.
5. Athletic field and new Gymnasium.
Illustrated booklet upon request. Sisters of St. Dominic

COLLEGE OF SAINT TERESA
WINONA, MINNESOTA
For the Higher Education of Catholic Women
Registered for Teacher's License by the New York Board of Regents. Accredited by the Association of American Universities. Holds membership in the North Central Association of Colleges. Confers the degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Trains High School Teachers; trains Vocational Specialists.
Attendance Exclusively Collegiate
Address: THE SECRETARY, Box K

Ravenhill
GERMANTOWN, PENNA.
Boarding and Day School for Girls
Conducted by the Religious of the Assumption
College Preparatory—General Courses
Apply to The Reverend Mother
Academy of the Assumption
SCHOOL HOUSE LANE, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pa.

St. Hilda Guild, Inc.

Church Vestments, Altar Linen
Ecclesiastical Embroidery
Conferences with reference to the adornment of churches
Old Embroidery Transferred
147 EAST 47th ST. NEW YORK
ELdorado 5-1058

Briefer Mention

Sahara: The Great Desert, by E. F. Gautier; translated by Dorothy Ford Mayhew. New York: Columbia University Press. $3.75.

TO THOSE of us for whom the Sahara has consisted of sand, moonlight and sheiks, Gautier's book will come as a desirable and engrossing revelation. The author is an eminent French geographer; and his best attempt at high-class vulgarization is herewith presented in a good translation, which is helped out considerably by pictures and maps of value. That the Sahara is not a waterless region, that its geological history is surprisingly interesting, and that even its climate is not fatal to all plant and animal life, are facts demonstrated with learning—and not too much learning—based upon personal experience such as few men enjoy. The author also discusses the problems of human geography in this vast region, concluding that the Sahara may be on the eve of a new historical period. Few recent additions to geographical literature of the more popular kind seem better worth having than this.

The Victorians and Their Reading, by Amy Cruse. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $4.00.

A NOVEL method and a persistent sanity commend Miss Cruse's summary of Victorian literature from the reader's point of view to all who relish the study of life and letters under the judicious Queen. What were people sitting up with, what were they discussing? This is the peg on which the author hangs all things—the Tractarian Movement, evolution, the poetry of Tennyson, the novels of Dickens, and very much more beside. The book is a skilful and by no means unscholarly survey by one whose ability to skim through old books is no less marked than her able journalistic craftsmanship. One thinks the general "literary" reader will be fond of it, and that it might well add something to the often hackneyed stuff found in college reference libraries. Victoria's was a great age. Our recent aversion to it is fast disappearing so that the desire to know what it actually was may well increase.

CONTRIBUTORS

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS is the author of "The Breakdown of Money," "Thomas More" and other books.

PHILIP BURNHAM is a member of THE COMMONWEAL staff.

SISTER MARIS STELLA is a member of the English department in St. Catherine's College, St. Paul, Minn.

REV. RUSSELL WILBUR is the pastor of the Church of Notre Dame de Lourdes, St. Louis, Mo.

ALICE CURTAYNE is the author of "St. Catherine of Siena," "A Recall to Dante" and other books.

JAMES W. LANE is a contributor to American periodicals and a critic of art.

REV. PATRICK J. HEALY is dean of the faculty of theology in the Catholic University of America. He is the author of "The Valerian Persecution" and "Historical Christianity and the Social Question."

DANIEL SARGENT, critic and poet, is the author of "Thomas More" and several books of verse, and is the president of the Catholic Poetry Society of America.

EDWARD S. SKILLIN, JR. is a member of THE COMMONWEAL staff.

LUCY L. TOMPKINS is a new contributor to THE COMMONWEAL.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED